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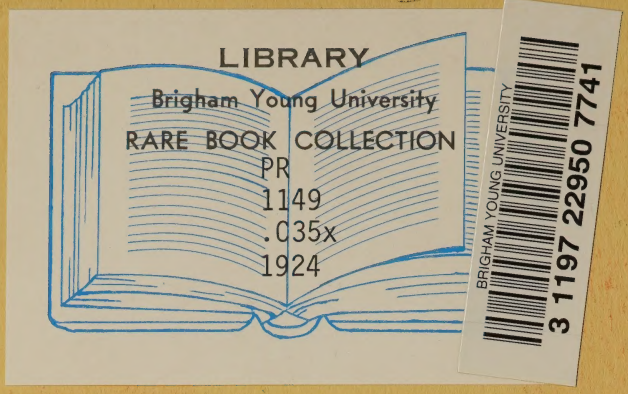
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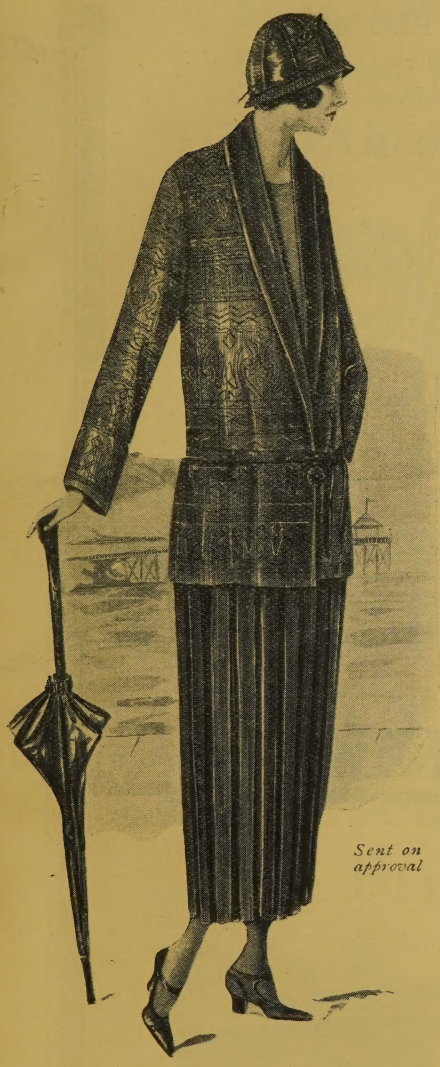

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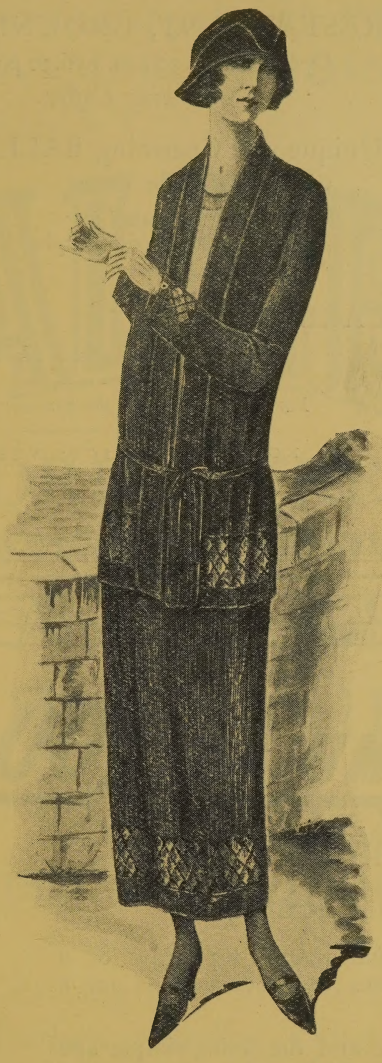

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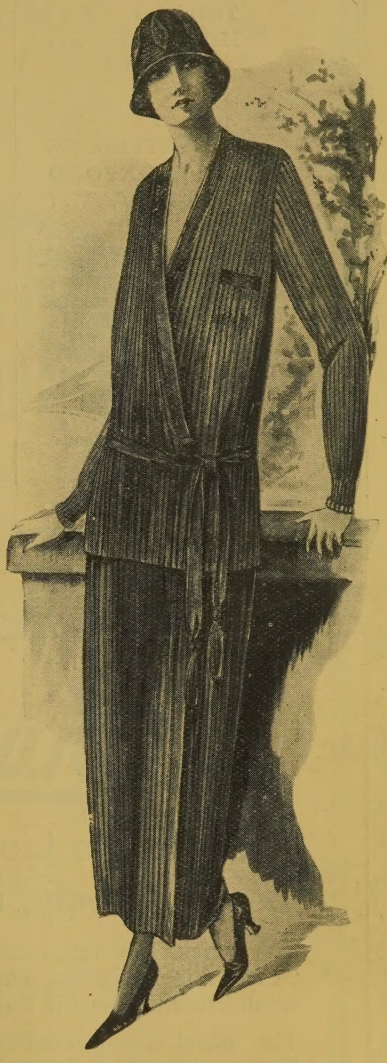

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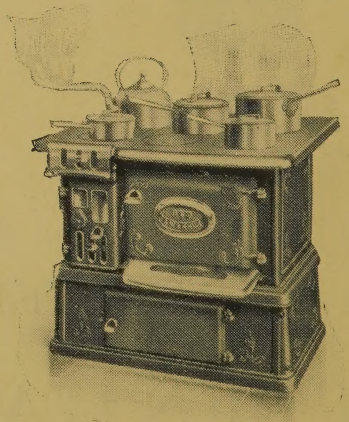

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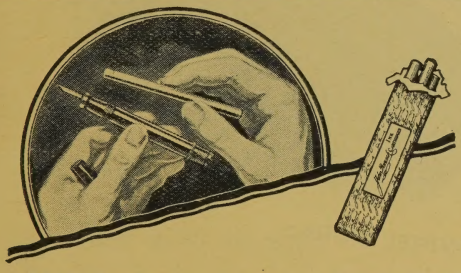

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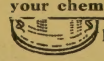

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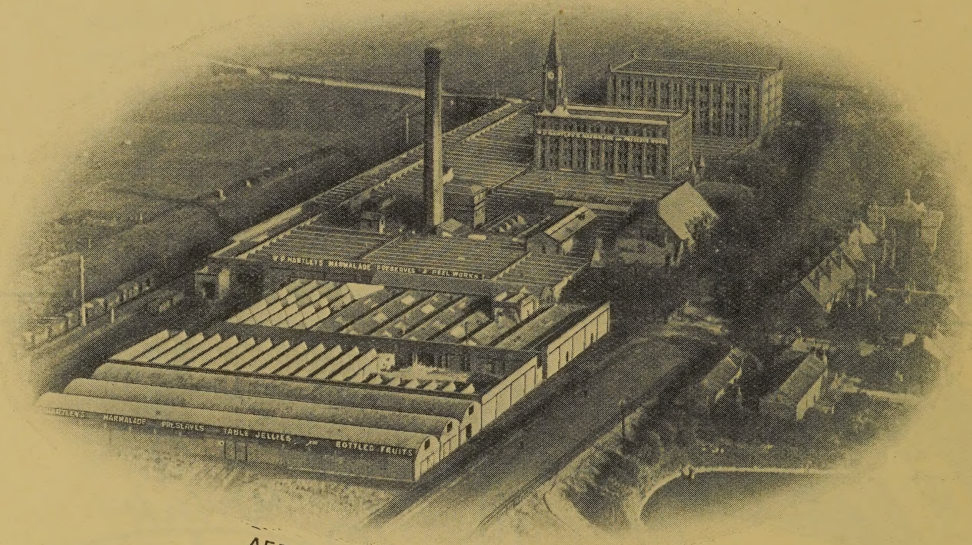

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UNCLE

By HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

HABAKKUK Mucklow—known as "Uncle" to everybody in and about Nether-Applewhite—was a sportsman who loved the chase even better than he loved good ale. He was nearly sixty when the war broke out, but he harboured deer and ran with hounds afoot as of yore. In his happy case pleasure marched hand in hand with business. Strangers lost in the New Forest, fearful of bogs, were likely to be speeded in the right direction by this jovial, clean-shaven man, whose smile was worth at least sixpence, and whose wise words might and did earn half a crown.

You may be sure that he never missed a meet at Christmastide. And he boasted a memory that never forgot a staunch horse or hound or the face of any follower who had tipped him. He could describe any famous run from find to finish, and knew every notable buck and fox who had "diddled" the hounds in previous seasons, not to mention those who had perished gloriously when their time came.

But he was at his best in the sanded parlour of the "Sir John Barleycorn" tavern, where, tankard in hand, he would hold forth to the gaffers of the village concerning the day's sport and those who had taken part in it. Of the old-timers, the men and women born and bred in the Forest, he invariably spoke with respect, whether they tipped him handsomely or not. But newcomers, however lavish of money, provoked sharp criticism.

"Who be the Bostocks," he would ask, "who be they? Not quality."

The Bostocks had bought a nice property just outside the Forest, and spent much money upon a rambling old house, money made somewhere in the north out of soap or jute or rubber. Bostock *père* had been given sound advice before he settled in a neighbourhood well known to be "cliquey" and "starchy." A good-natured cynic said to him: "They won't care how you made your money down there, if you engage a first-rate cook and buy the best wine." Thomas Bostock had not asked for this advice, but he took it. Nevertheless, he might have languished for some years as a comparative outsider, despite his many possessions, had not the most precious of these happened to be a charming daughter, who rode

well to hounds. Bostock subscribed munificently to foxhounds and buckhounds, and within a couple of seasons was accepted as being " in " the Forest if not " of " it.

He was not yet accepted by Uncle.

An old gaffer answered Habakkuk Mucklow.

" They Bostocks be rich folk ; they pays good wages, and I says——"

Uncle interrupted promptly :

" I don't care what you says, granfer ; I want you to listen to what I says. Old Bostock be a carpet-bagger."

" Carpet-bagger ? What be that ? "

Uncle eyed him whimsically :

" I bain't surprised at your gert ignerunce, granfer. Likely as not you never heard tell o' Captain Columbus ? Did 'ee now ? "

" I dunno as I minds the name as belongin' to these parts."

" He discovered Ameriky, he did. And Captain were the first carpet-bagger, see ? "

" No, I don't."

" You will, when I've larned 'ee. Captain Columbus were allers ready for a lark, same as I be. One marning he up and says to the King o' Spain——"

" Ah—h—h ! I knows. Him as married Queen Victory's grand-arter."

" You knows less than a tomtit. I be talkin' o' they ancient days afore you was born to ask silly questions. Captain up and says : ' I be sick to my stummick wi' this rampagious old world, and 'tis my intention to find a new un.' Wi' that, he packs his carpet bag, and sails away till he comes to Ameriky, where he crowns hisself President o' the United States."

" Well, I never—— ! "

" Aye, I bain't going to teach you any more history, granfer, but you knows now what a carpet-bagger means, just a feller as settles in another country and thinks he owns it. That be old Bostock. I helped beat his covers one day, and, dang me, if he bain't a potter o' bunnies setting—— ! "

" His darter be a fine young 'ooman."

" Ah—h—h. I knows one young man o' your way o' thinking."

At this point Uncle buried his handsome nose in his tankard. Then he paid his reckoning and walked home. As he walked, his thoughts dwelt persistently upon young Harry Culverley.

Next to Lionel Pomfret, the only son of Uncle's beloved landlord, came Harry Culverley in Habakkuk Mucklow's affections. The Culverleys were true Foresters, who scorned carpet-baggers. Harry's father had been Master of the Buckhounds ; and Harry himself had

been " blooded " to deer and fox before he was seven ! Indeed, he knew the Forest almost as well as Uncle himself. Culverley lay fifteen miles away, beyond Brockenhurst, and nearly as far from the property recently bought by Thomas Bostock.

Uncle was well aware, of course, that money was scarce at Culverley. It had been scarce before the war. Two parlourmaids had replaced butler and footman when Master Harry became a Hussar. With the income tax at five shillings in the pound, one of the parlourmaids betook herself to the nearest Munition Works ; and the loose boxes held just two hunters instead of half a dozen. This was tragedy to Uncle. And he had wit enough to realise that matters financial were likely to be worse instead of better.

At this moment Chloe Bostock appeared in the hunting-field. Now Uncle, as a harbourer of deer, had trained a sharp pair of eyes to observe trifles which, ordinarily, escape observation. Women take to hunting for many reasons. But, quite obviously, Chloe hunted because she loved it. The same could be said of Harry Culverley. Each came out to watch hounds at work and to stick to them when they hit the right line. No " coffee-housing," or what Uncle called " mumbudgetting," for them. Moreover, Chloe was a V.A.D. in a local hospital, and only able to hunt once a week. Harry Culverley, home on sick leave, hunted regularly.

Chloe Bostock captured Uncle unconditionally, bewitching him with horsemanship and pleasant, unaffected manners. It annoyed Uncle, however, to see that she was better mounted than Harry, but this annoyance vanished when the compensating thought suddenly came to him that Providence had sent the carpet-bagger to the New Forest with the special design of rebuilding anew the ancient House of Culverley. From the moment when he overheard Harry telling Chloe the names of the more remarkable hounds, Uncle decided swiftly that here was an obvious match of heaven's own making.

But how to bring about so desirable a consummation puzzled him. Once before, he had boldly dared to suggest a rich marriage to Master Harry. At Easter, when hard-riding swells come to the New Forest to finish the season, Uncle had " marked down " a young lady said to be worth a " plum " as the future Mrs Harry Culverley. She, too, rode dashingly, a true lover of the game. And Uncle, you may be sure, noticed quickly that her eyes lingered upon the Hussar. Alone with Harry, and knowing that he was regarded as a privileged character, he had said outright :

" I'd like to see 'ee Master of Hounds, Master Harry ; yas, I would."

" All right, Uncle. You find the cash, and I'll do the rest."

" Will 'ee ? "

" Rather."

Uncle winked solemnly.

" That there Miss Judkins be worth a hundred thousand, so they tells me."

Harry laughed, and shook his head. Uncle went on :

" I knows what you be thinkin' of—her long, sharp nose, which do, seemingly, come round carner afore her face, but, Lard love 'ee, you'd be lookin' at your hounds, a week after marriage, not at her nose."

Harry went on laughing and shaking his head.

But Chloe's nose was neither long nor sharp. And Uncle noticed that Harry looked at it, when he might have been looking at hounds. Chloe's nose had a skyward tilt to it, an additional reason for following it.

By this time Uncle had divined that the Captain of Hussars was bashful with maids !

And his sick leave would soon be up.

If they could be left alone together——

But this was difficult of accomplishment. Lady Cynthia Culverley, Harry's mother, had not yet called upon Mrs Bostock, partly because the Culverley car was jacked up in war time, and partly also because Lady Cynthia was slow to make new acquaintances. General Culverley happened, moreover, to be a Tory ; Thomas Bostock was a Radical and a democrat. The young couple, in ordinary times, might have met at balls, on the golf links, or at the houses of common friends.

Fate ordained that they should never see each other, except in the hunting-field.

Upon the Friday before Christmas Day, the buckhounds met not far from Nether-Applewhite. Uncle watched the young couple.

Harry, as usual, engaged the hunt servants in talk. Chloe was surrounded by middle-aged and elderly men, who were more than eager to pay attention to a young lady whose father's cellar held '99 Clicquot and Napoleon brandy. Harry—so Uncle noted—glanced at Chloe from time to time out of the corner of an ardent eye. Presently he spoke genially to Uncle, and asked him how he did.

" I be hearty as never was, Master Harry. I hopes you bain't mendin' *too* quick, sir."

" Ten days more," said Harry.

Uncle reflected hopefully that much might be accomplished in ten days. Unhappily, man and maid were not likely to meet more than twice during that time, inasmuch as Chloe only hunted once a week. Uncle looked Harry straight in the face, as he observed critically :

" 'Tis a rare bit o' 'orseflesh as Miss Bostock be ridin' ? " He added slily, as Harry nodded : " Be—utiful pair, I says, in my every-day way." Harry nodded again ; Uncle sighed before he spoke the last word : " 'Twould be a sad mishap, Master Harry, if so be as they found theirselves bogged."

" Awful," Harry admitted, as he tightened a girth.

Master and tufters jogged off to the enclosure, where a notable buck had been harboured. Harry, to Uncle's disgust, went with them. Chloe and her elderly cavaliers remained with the pack. Tufting, which precedes the regular hunting, presents rare opportunities for love-making, as Uncle was well aware. After the pack was laid on, if the scent happened to be good, undivided attention must be given to the chase. After the hunt, man and maid would go different ways. Uncle shook his head, as his active mind dwelt upon these things.

The tuft lasted well over an hour. Meanwhile Uncle had exchanged a few sentences with Miss Bostock. Seeing that her mare was inclined to be restive, he asked permission to adjust the curb-chain. Chloe smiled upon him sweetly.

" Scent'll hold in the heather," Uncle informed her. " And 'tis a gert buck, Miss. I knows 'un well. And, wi' this wind, he'll take the line he did las' year, when he diddled 'em so handsome in Rhinefields. Do 'ee know the country about Hasleys', Miss ? "

" Not very well, Mr Mucklow."

" Ah—h—h ! 'Tis bad goin' as never was, ruts an' rabbit 'oles, and a narsty bit o' bog, too."

Chloe laughed.

" You cruel man ! Are you trying to frighten me ? "

" I knows you bain't one to be afeard, Miss. But I makes bold to tell 'ee to foller a good man to-day. Major Hall, he knows the Forest better nor most."

" Major Hall knows it much too well," replied Chloe sharply.

Uncle grinned. He was expecting this affirmation. The gallant major, once a thruster, had begun to ride too canny to please a dashing horsewoman. Uncle muttered deprecatingly :

" Aye, that be so. And, as for Master, he can't abide to have ladies a-ridin' in his pocket."

" Of course I know that," said Chloe.

Uncle allowed his eyes to wander in the direction of the elderly cavaliers.

" I dunno as any o' they'd do, Miss."

Chloe laughed, touched by Uncle's obvious solicitude, but quite unconscious of his objectives. Then the bolt fell.

" I must trust to luck and my mare," she said hopefully. " This will be my last day for six weeks."

Uncle stared at her, agape with consternation. She continued blithely :

" I'm taking on a job away from home, to relieve a friend. It's hard lines, because my horse is just in condition, but there it is. Duty first, Mr Mucklow."

" Aye, Miss, I be an upholder o' duty allers, but a bit o' pleasure be the sweeter, I says, atween jobs."

Chloe commented upon this, but Uncle was not listening. All his faculties were now concentrated upon making his " point," regardless of where the notable buck might elect to go. Intuition told him that the maid was ripe as the man for the marriage state. To bring them together, in spite of obstacles, fired his wits. Given the happy opportunity, each would rise adequately to it. He slapped his thigh, as he exclaimed :

" Dang me, if I bain't a fool ! "

" Oh, Mr Mucklow—— "

Uncle said solemnly :

" Yas ; I'd forgotten Captain Culverley."

As the name fell from his lips, Chloe's cheeks displayed a deeper tinge of pink. Nobody but Uncle would have noticed it. Very thoughtfully, he gazed at the landscape, as he continued :

" Captain, he be safe for 'ee to foller, a kind young gentleman, and a rare lover of a hound. Allers to right or left of 'en, he be, accordin' to wind. Ah—h—h ! I see Alferd a-comin' for the pack."

A whip galloped up. Hounds were uncoupled as the Master approached leisurely with his faithful tufters. Harry rode beside him. Uncle began to manœuvre for position. He intended to let Master Harry know that Miss Bostock was leaving home, but, alas, this good intention was frustrated by the other men, keen to learn from an eye-witness what had happened to the buck. Harry spoke in a loud, clear voice which Uncle overheard, and so did Miss Bostock. The buck had been excellently tufted ; he had broken cover a few minutes previously, and was last seen heading for Hasleys'. Plenty of scent, and all conditions favourable for a gallop.

Seeing that quiet speech with Master Harry was unachievable, Uncle slipped across the heather to Miss Chloe.

" I heard," she said pleasantly. " It's Hasleys'—ruts, rabbit-holes, and a nasty bit of bog."

" May the Lard preserve 'ee ! "

" Amen to that, Mr Mucklow."

" All the same, Miss, do 'ee stick tight as wax to young Captain,

and then, may be, you'll ha' the hunt o' the season. I knows what I knows."

"And you don't tell all you know either. I'm much obliged to you."

Uncle's face appeared to be as innocent as that of Moses when he lay amongst the bulrushes. And yet, at the moment, he was contemplating treachery. A word from him might steer the maid into a bog from which, of course, a gallant Hussar would be constrained to rescue her. If hounds ran fast, as they were almost certain to do, two followers would be left behind. Abandoned by Diana, a kindlier goddess would take them in charge. Against this bristled the probability that a hard-riding young fellow, with eyes upon hounds and ruts, might, unwittingly, gallop on ahead, leaving the maid to be extricated by the elderly and middle-aged.

The Master trotted off with the pack; the field followed. Uncle took his own line, hoping to nick in later. He knew every stream and gutter where the buck would "soil"; and if hounds checked, as was inevitable, and if the buck did not go perfectly straight, as was likely, Habakkuk Mucklow might be in at the finish.

Before the pack was laid on at the point where the buck left the enclosure, Harry and Chloe exchanged demure greetings, but pride prevented her from asking him to pilot her. Nor did she tell him that he would not meet her in the hunting-field again before he returned to France. Nevertheless, V.A.D. work presented a peg upon which Harry hung this remark:

"If they wing me, Miss Bostock, I should like to be nursed by you."

At that moment, hounds hit the line with such a crash that further talk became impossible. The buck had fifteen minutes' start, a fact of which the leading hounds seemed to be well aware, for they raced over the heather at a pace much too hot to last. As the wind blew from the south-easterly quarter, Harry rode slightly to the left. Chloe followed at a discreet distance. As she rode, she reflected comfortably that her pilot was in the cavalry, and not very likely to find himself in need of a nurse. But he had been wounded once. The thought of this obsessed her. She might never see his face again. On account of that she looked the harder at his straight back, as she touched her mare with the spur. An open stretch of heather invited her to gallop up abreast of Harry's bay. When he saw her, he shouted:

"We're in for a good thing."

She glanced over her shoulder. The elderly and middle-aged were far astern. Hounds were together and running fast and mute. Hasleys', with its terrors, lay just ahead. Chloe wondered whether

solicitude for her safety would concern Captain Culverley. If he cared, surely he would say—something.

He did.

" 'Ware bog ! "

He picked his way across the treacherous ground, and she followed.

" 'Ware rabbit-holes and ruts ! "

The words were hardly out of his mouth when his horse pecked badly, recovered, and plunged into a second row of deep ruts. The bay's nose scraped the heather, but Harry refused to leave his conveyance. Chloe was much impressed. Her mare picked her way cleverly, till they came to better ground.

At Dockens' Water, hounds checked for five minutes, and the stragglers came up. Harry, intent upon hound-work, said nothing to Chloe, somewhat to her mortification. Sorely was she tempted to tell him that this might be her last hunt that season. Was he too keen a sportsman ? She held the question in abeyance. Others had told her that he was a keen soldier, but he hated to talk " shop."

A note from the Master's horn and they were off again, through Broomy and on to the plain beyond, where the galloping was sound. Again and again Harry glanced behind him, with an unmistakable expression upon his face. He wanted her. And she wanted him ! Nothing else mattered. He was pursuing a stout buck ; she was pursuing a quarry quite as likely to escape. But she didn't try to overtake her Hussar, although she was better mounted and the mare straining at her bridle.

The line bore to the left, skirting Slufters. The buck seemed to disdain the woodlands. A man in a cart had viewed him heading for Ocknell. Probably he would soil again where the Ringwood road crossed the water. And here, sure enough, hounds checked for the second time, but not for long.

" Forrard ! Forrard ! "

" There he is," said Harry.

Chloe could just see the buck leisurely trotting up a distant slope. He carried himself gallantly with no sign of fatigue or stress. A moment later he disappeared.

The pack raced into an enclosure and into fresh deer. Older and more reliable hounds hung back, not owning the fresh scent ; young hounds had to be stopped—no easy matter in thick woods. The Master needed Harry's help ; Chloe nibbled at a piece of cake. After an exasperating delay the true line was found, but the scent failed noticeably. And the followers were obliged to stick to the rides, relying upon ears instead of eyes to " locate " hounds. Harry

hesitated, hearing nothing. The Master galloped down a ride to the right.

" Can you hear anything ? " asked Harry of Chloe.

She shook her head.

He laid before her two plans. Ever since the pack had been laid on, the buck had consistently moved up wind and to the left. A year ago, he had run much the same line and tricked the field in Rhinefields. Probably, he was repeating successful tactics. And in Rhinefields he would be sure to find fresh deer again.

Finally, Harry decided to bear to the left, although the Master had chosen the right. They galloped on, pausing frequently to listen, but hearing nothing.

" They run confoundedly mute," said Harry testily.

" And so do you," thought Chloe.

Five minutes later they debouched upon the Boldrewood road.

" I see Habakkuk Mucklow," said Chloe.

" Good biz ! Uncle will know where they are."

Uncle, a bit breathless from his exertions, did know. Hounds, according to this expert, were running right-handed. He had seen them and heard them.

" I hear 'un now," he added, with his hand to his ear.

" I'm hanged if I do," said Harry. " Are you quite sure, Uncle ? "

" I be sartain sure that I knows where they be this instant minute, Master Harry. You has no time to lose, seemin'ly. Gallop down road a bit, and then across to Brinton toll-bar. Hounds'll check at the water. Like as not you'll kill near Brockenhurst. Good luck to 'ee ! I be fair beat, I be."

Harry handed him a shining half-crown before he cantered on down the road.

" We shall be all right," he told Chloe.

Uncle spat upon the half-crown before he transferred it to his breeches pocket. As he did so, he smiled knowingly. Then he began to retrace his steps to distant Nether-Applewhite, where good ale awaited him.

Harry and Chloe rode on alone till they came to Brinton toll-bar. Travellers going and coming along the Bournemouth road had heard neither hounds nor horn. Harry was quite unable to dissemble his disappointment. Obviously, they were hopelessly out of it, out of a clinking run, perhaps *the* run of the season. Chloe, with some knowledge of the male temperament, suggested sandwiches and a nip from the flask.

" Let's make the best of it," she suggested.

" But my leave is nearly up, Miss Bostock."

" Mine is up," she replied tranquilly.

"What——"

His surprise was complimentary. Chloe explained. Then she said demurely:

"I had better be moving home. Good-bye, Captain Culverley, and good luck!"

"Do you know the way?"

"Y—es."

"The short cut, I mean?"

"N—n—o."

"I'll show you."

Once more they took to the woodlands, to Arcadia, which, even in winter, presents allurements. Side by side, in silence, they rode slowly down a lovely glade, treading softly upon deep moss. The sandwiches, so Chloe noticed, were forgotten, but a nip was taken from the flask. Harry said briskly:

"We'll not hurry on account of the gees."

Having said this, he had the grace to blush a little. Chloe patted her horse's neck. Harry essayed another flight of fancy.

"If it hadn't been for me, you'd have followed the Master."

"Why talk about that? What is—is."

By this time they were nearing the Boldrewood road again, at the point where they had left Uncle. And here, by the luck of things, they met a forest-keeper, who made a positively astounding declaration. Buck, and hounds, and a few followers had passed him within the hour, and the buck was running in exactly the opposite direction to that indicated by Uncle. He had kept on his self-appointed course to the left, disdaining Rhinefields, his former sanctuary. At first Harry refused to believe this, so great was his faith in Uncle. Corroborative detail, however, was forthcoming from the lips of another wayfarer.

Alone once more with Chloe, Harry cursed Uncle as heartily as the Lord Archbishop of Rheims cursed the little jackdaw. Chloe defended Mr Mucklow.

"He wanted us to have a good run; he was ever so keen; and he told me to stick tight to you."

"Did he?"

"And he knew that this would be my last hunt for ever so long."

"Oh! He knew that, too!"

"He will be terribly upset when he finds out that he directed us wrong."

Harry said more cheerfully:

"Poor old Uncle! Yes; you are right. He wished us well. At the meet he spoke to me about you. Very complimentary he was, too."

"What ever did he say?"

"He seemed to have just discovered what I found out the first day I saw you."

"And what was that?"

"Your—beauty."

Being a plunger, Harry should have followed up this opening, but he didn't. It is possible that Chloe liked him the better because, obviously, he had not practised the arts of the carpet knight. To make quite sure of this, she said softly:

"I suppose paying compliments is part of the cavalry course?"

Harry laughed as he whispered confidentially:

"I'll tell you something. It's a secret between us. In our mess I'm dead lag of the compliment class. I wish I wasn't. I should like to turn myself loose here and now. The rummy thing is that I could tell your mare to her face just what I think of her, point by point, but I couldn't do that with you."

"Why not? It would amuse me to hear a good judge of a horse tell off myself, point by point, compliments barred."

Harry looked her over. He realised that he was challenged.

"All right," he said. "I'll have a go at it. If I take a bad toss and hurt myself——"

"It will be my duty to nurse you," she added.

"Very good bone," he began.

"But not quite the right blood," she said gravely.

Poor Harry flushed crimson. He had heard this cruel criticism from his father and others. Chloe laughed reassuringly:

"I put that in unkindly, Captain Culverley. I overheard Major Hall speak of me as a nice little filly, but rather hairy at the heel. As a matter of fact, I am proud of the fact that my grandfather rose from the ranks."

"I should like to punch old Hall's head," said Harry.

"Go on! With my points, I mean. I promise not to interrupt again."

"You carry your head like a blood 'un splendid feet and fetlocks; just the right shoulder, not too long in the back, well-ribbed up, sound from tip to toe, and a grand mover. There you are!"

"Thanks."

"Quiet in single harness, I take it?"

Chloe exhibited slight confusion. Harry continued:

"Bidding ought to be brisk when you come up." As she remained silent, he leant nearer to her, whispering: "I say, has there been much bidding?"

She answered, almost inaudibly:

"Not from the right bidders."

Harry had never craned at a stiff fence. As a rule he leapt first and looked afterwards.

" Am I the right sort of bidder ? " he asked.

Chloe might have temporised ; in pre-war times, doubtless, she would have played her fish a little longer ; but his eyes looked deep into hers with a tenderness and sincerity which exacted as much from her.

" Yes," she answered.

Meanwhile, Uncle, contrary to custom, was slowly walking back to Nether-Applewhite. As a rule, knowing everybody, he asked (and got) a " lift " home, after he had cooled himself down in some convenient tavern. More, he deliberately chose the longer route, which happened to pass the property belonging to Mr Bostock. It was likely, therefore, that Miss Chloe would overtake him on the road, and the thought of this so enlivened Uncle that he sang snatches of song as he plodded along the muddy ways, frequently pausing to look back and listen.

Presently, he reached a spot where roads branched, and here he sat down in the lee of the hedge to smoke a contemplative pipe.

As he smoked, his sharp ears caught the sound of voices. Uncle peered over the hedge, and beheld Harry and Chloe approaching. They rode upon the soft turf which bordered the highway.

Uncle bobbed down behind the hedge, and put his horny hand over the bowl of his pipe. A broad grin embellished his jovial countenance. He had noticed that Harry's arm encircled Chloe's waist !

At the branching roads, the lovers parted. Uncle crawled along the fence and overheard the last words.

" I shall see your father to-morrow morning."

" I shall whisper something to him to-night."

They laughed, glanced about them, and kissed.

" Good-night, you little witch ! "

" Good-night, Harry. Be sure to dream of me ! "

" That's a sitter."

Chloe trotted on. Harry watched her till she was out of sight. Uncle ran swiftly along the fence, cut across a field, and five minutes later encountered Harry face to face. Harry reined up.

" Uncle, you silly old man, I've a bone to pick with you."

" Have 'ee, Master Harry ? "

" You misdirected us, b' Jove—*you !* We lost hounds ; never saw or heard 'em again."

" Well, I never ! "

" And you were so positive that you knew where they were."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I be gettin' a very old man. And so tired, too, as never was. Misdirected 'ee? That be tarr'ble—tarr'ble."

He sighed deeply, looking so miserable that Harry's kind heart melted within him. Uncle added the last touch.

"I lost hounds, too, Master Harry."

"You look as if you'd lost your wife. Cheer up! Sometimes, old chap, wrong is right and right is wrong. Here's half a thick un for you."

Half a sovereign joined half a crown in Uncle's pocket. He thanked the donor becomingly, adding slily:

"What be you doing, Master Harry, so far from Culverley?"

Harry reddened as he answered hastily:

"Miss Bostock was not sure of her road home. I went with her as far as the cross roads yonder."

"Ah—h—h! A be—utiful young lady, to my notion, a gert pleasure to serve she, I reckon. 'Tis too bad she was thrown out along o' my rampagious ignerunce. Be she much miffed wi' me, Master Harry?"

"Not she, Uncle. She stuck up for you stoutly. Mistakes will happen. Good-night, and a Merry Christmas."

He cantered on.

It was late that evening when Uncle strode into his cottage, and Jane, his wife, received him sourly, knowing that he had declined a remunerative job of work to "traipse," as she termed it, after a lot of dirty dogs. Uncle handed her the half-crown.

"You take that, my girl. 'Tis money well earned."

He discreetly kept silence about the half-sovereign. Jane took the half-crown, saying dourly:

"Who gave it to 'ee?"

"Young Squire Culverley. Him and Miss Bostock lost hounds, and I happened along just then, and put 'un right."

Jane sniffed.

"*Right*——! It be wrong to hunt in war-time, I says."

Uncle smiled upon her.

"Such matters, old dear, be too high for 'ee. Me and the Dook o' Wellington carries the same mind about that. Huntin' be the backbone of Old England. And I'll tell 'ee summat else. Right be wrong sometimes, and wrong be right."

"What a tale!"

"Aye. There's a mort o' things for 'ee to learn, Jane. Now, you get supper, my girl, and thank the Lard that you be married to a very forcible, understanding man."

Jane sniffed again, remarking sharply:

"Was you in at the finish, Habakkuk?"

"Was I in?" repeated Uncle scornfully. "We had the run of our lives, old dear, and if 'ee don't believe me, you ax Miss Bostock."

THREE DRINKING SONGS

By PHILIP GUEDALLA

WINE

(*A Percy Relique*)

Oh, sair and sair is the Border rain
  Abune the Border wa',
But muckle and muckle a carl may write
  About little or nothing at a'.

He's tane the keys of the low cellar
  To draw the blude-red wine,
And he's gar'd them ride to his open gate
  From Teviotside to Tyne.

Oh, strang and strang was the wine he drew,
  And fair were his daughters twain ;
And several guests said, " Coo-me-doo,"
  And others, " It looks like rain."

Oh, whatten a song a man may sing,
  Gin it never coherent be,
Wi' mony and mony a deid man's ring
  And mickle topographie.

GIN

(*After Mr Gay*)

When Highwaymen begin—a
  To pistol on the Heath, Sir,
They steel their Hearts with Gin—a
  To take a turn with Death, Sir,
    Because they find
    It was designed
    That Draughts of Gin
    Conduce to Sin.

And Gentlemen who ride—a
To Tyburn in the Cart, Sir,
They put the same inside—a
To stimulate their Heart, Sir,
While Doxies dry
A doleful Eye,
And stay with Gin,
The Next-of-kin.

BEER

(*After Mr H. Belloc and/or Mr G. K. Chesterton*)

The beer they brew at Ponder's End
Is beer a man may drink ;
So wanders end at Ponder's End,
Where cares go down the sink.

Old Ponder came to Essex
For rest and change of air ;
But when they tasted Ponder's brew,
They kept old Ponder there.

He helped the halt along with malt,
And ailing men with ale ;
And far behind, the lame and blind
Were blind with his wassail.

The first of all the Ponders
Was everybody's friend ;
So ponder well how Ponder came
At last to Ponder's End.

BIRDS ON MY ISLAND

By COMPTON MACKENZIE

MONG the many pleasures of a rare and peculiar intimacy bestowed upon the inhabitant of a small island there is none, I fancy, so intimate as the companionship of the birds that, like oneself, have chosen it for a residence.

The island of Jethou, where I live, is small enough. Scarcely a mile round, it rises from the sea in the shape of a steep tumulus to the height of 262 feet, and is guarded north and south by two small Mont St Michels, known as Creviçon (the prawny place) and La Grande Fauconnaire (the great falconry). Jethou may probably be derived from Siethou, which in old Norse meant the high island. Any attempt to connect it with the ancient Breton god Ou is the merest romanticism.

The island, compared with Herm, which I have abandoned, is pleasantly free from Elementals. It is first heard of in the tenth century when Rollo of Normandy presented it to his admiral Restald. Later on he in turn presented it to the Benedictines, but it was never the seat of a religious house, and so when the Reformation ran its bloody course in the Channel Islands Jethou escaped the doom which seems to rest on Herm.

An Elizabethan governor introduced the rabbits which I am now doing my best to exterminate, and Drayton in his *Polyolbion* wrote of Jethou and its conies. If one of the "Georgian" poets should produce yet another versified catalogue (which Heaven forbid!), I hope to provide him with an easier word to rhyme than "rabbits" or "conies." Sometime about 1730 a benefactor planted a grove of sweet chestnuts, and in the walled garden by the cliff's edge a mulberry tree. We have also some immense hawthorns and gnarled pear trees of considerable antiquity.

But this is a note on birds, and I must not succumb to the Flora.

All round Creviçon the receding tide exposes a large tract of sand, the haunt in winter of many geese, duck, herons, grebes, and curlews. About the end of March the puffins arrive, a small and select party, which always occupy the same disused rabbit burrows. A few herring-gulls and black-backed gulls, both lesser and greater, nest on Fauconnaire, but with the arrival of the puffins and the nesting of the gulls most of the other sea-birds depart to breed elsewhere.

However, two or three pairs of oyster-catchers remain, each of which is under the impression that the island exists as a honeymoon resort for themselves to the exclusion of all other birds, beasts, and human beings.

During the winter the oyster-catchers live decoratively in large groups like the birds in a Japanese painting ; but as soon as they mate they forget all about the beautiful sweeping curves of black and white they traced across the wintry sky, and become the fussiest and most undignified birds imaginable. The curlew family is, I fancy, notorious generally for its agitated family life, and I really should hate to be a young oyster-catcher. The poor children are scolded all the time for the slightest initiative on their part ; the father and mother in turn try to harry anybody that comes within a hundred yards of the nest, flying rapidly backwards and forwards with shrill whistles, their long red beaks appearing redder than usual with exasperation. Occasionally two ravens from the island of Herm visit Jethou, but they are not allowed to stay long when the oyster-catchers are busy with their families, and several times I have seen them attacked and driven off, and even pursued by the parents almost as far as their own haunts in Herm. I have never heard of anybody who has become friends with an oyster-catcher, but my own impression is that they are rather intellectual birds. They never sit looking bored and vapid like the gulls ; but they are always strutting about and gossiping to each other, and their note when not agitated can be nearly as liquid as a thrush's.

The birds that I regard as the tutelary creatures of the island are the wrens. Most of them continue to inhabit the stone walls and banks, but a few of them have become quite maritime and build their nests in the lowest clumps of samphire by the sea's edge. There in company with the rock pipits they search for the minute insects found among the lichen on the granite. In winter the garden is sometimes visited by golden-crested wrens which, no doubt owing to the smallness of their brains, seem perfectly fearless of human beings, round whom they flutter like butterflies or humming-birds. Some wonderfully delicious insect must live in the empty gorse-pods of last year, for these tiny birds will explore them, one after another, through the whole of a fine morning. So, too, in the bark of the huge mulberry tree that overhangs half our small garden an infinitesimal insect keeps these airy creatures ceaselessly busy.

To return for a moment to the birds on the foreshore, I have often noticed great tits and long-tailed tits investigating the contents of the yellow and umber winkles and devouring them with much relish ; yet these birds are only transients that never spend more than a few days with us. On the other hand, I have never seen the blue tits

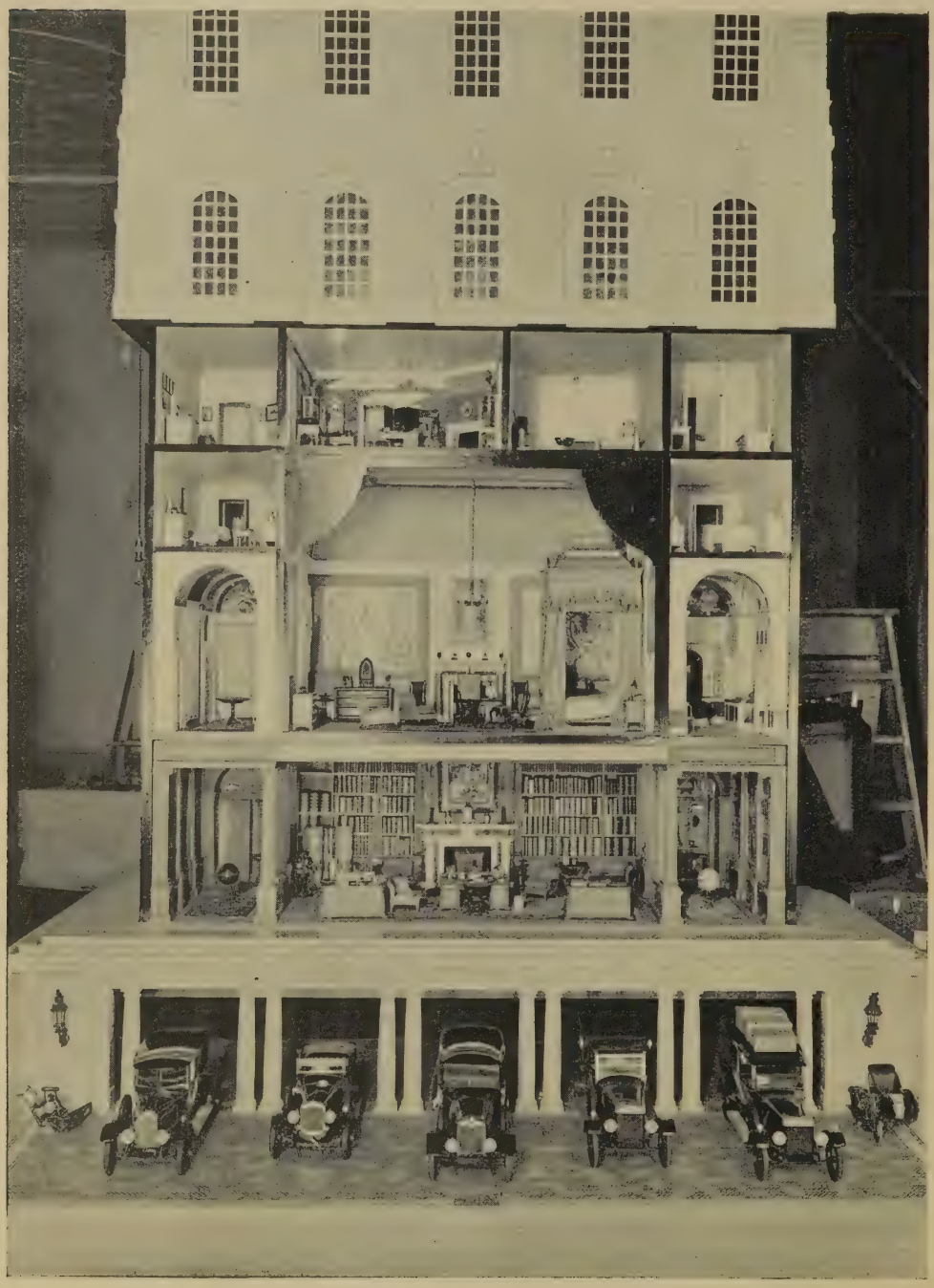
visit the foreshore, although they remain with us all the winter, stringing the bare twigs like a living necklace of turquoise matrix.

One fact alone makes bird-life on Jethou remarkable, and that is the complete absence of sparrows, either as visitors or inhabitants. I have actually never seen a sparrow on the island ! This is chiefly a blessing, because they are such offensive little brutes to other small birds. Flocks of destructive greenfinches arrive instead, one party of which deliberately pecked off the sprouts of a ranunculus bed and pulled every blossom of the winter-flowering crocuses to pieces. Even the chaffinches cannot resist crocus flowers. I cannot help sympathising with the pleasure they must get from pulling off all the petals and leaving the brilliant saffron stamens to glow on the wintry air. Few bullfinches visit us; but this bird is being so systematically persecuted by fruit growers in France (whence, of course, we get most of our migrant birds on Jethou) that they become scarcer every season.

Two years ago the December halcyon was celebrated as it should be by a pair of kingfishers flying out over the tranquil blue sea; but I have seen no sign of them since then. During the winter the blackbirds and the thrushes are about equal in numbers; but the thrushes do not stay with us to nest, and therefore the blackbirds must be considered the typical representatives of that family. Nothing ever seems to cure their wildness. I know every one of them personally, as I might say, but there is not one of them that does not, as soon as he sees me, set up as loud a shrill of alarm as if I were a French sportsman. Blackbirds suffer most from the appetite of a kestrel which, while it pretends to be looking for field mice, never fails to attack any small bird if it has the opportunity.

There has been a tendency lately to declare the kestrel innocent of cannibalism; but my experience, with admirable opportunities of watching his behaviour, convicts him. He has not merely a far-seeing eye, but a discriminating eye. On two occasions I have walked out of the house with a stick, and he has sat perched on the flagstaff well within range and watched me unmoved; but when I have gone back indoors and exchanged my stick for a gun he has immediately spotted the difference and vanished at once.

Three pairs of stonechats stay with us all the year round, and with the wrens they are the friendliest and most native of the birds to my thinking. The whinchats and the wheatears prefer Herm. Last year an eagle visited us, and the splendid fellow looked, on Jethou, as large as Sinbad's roc. And then the cuckoos ! We shall have at least four pairs this spring, and they will cuckoo all day long, and all night long too, when the moon is shining. They will drown the gramophone.



THE DOLL'S HOUSE
Showing Outer Walls Raised

THE QUEEN'S DOLL'S HOUSE

By SIR BASIL THOMSON, K.C.B.

THE miniature Royal Palace, which, after its removal from Sir Edwin Lutyens' studio, now stands in its special pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, and will some day go to Windsor Castle and become a royal heirloom, is not a doll's house at all. It is a model of the sort of house in which the King and Queen of England might choose to live in the year 1924, if such a house were to be had, but it is far more than a mere model. If men of the Plantagenet and Tudor and Stuart times had made for the historians of the twentieth century faithful models of their houses and all that they contained, historians would not be groping in the dark and the designers of furniture and painters of historical portraits could go to work with a sure hand. Or, to take the matter farther back, what would we not now give for models of Roman and Greek and Egyptian interiors, with all their household furniture and utensils in their place? Much of the popular interest in Mr Howard Carter's discoveries in the Valley of the Kings is due to the partial reconstruction of the daily life of people who lived and reigned in those remote times.

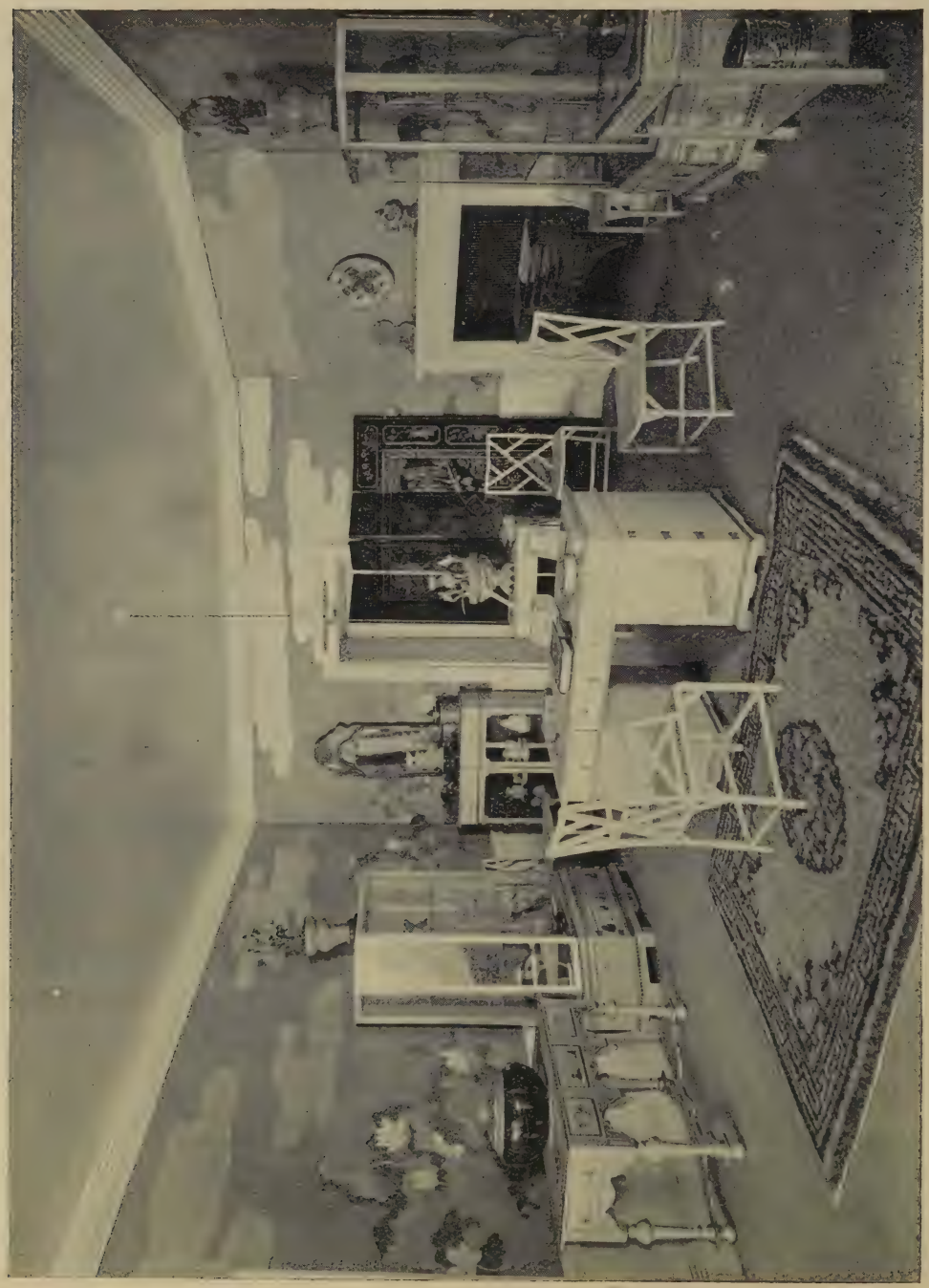
Whether Princess Marie Louise or Sir Edwin Lutyens was the first to conceive a project that is unique in history does not very much matter: the untiring energy of the Princess and the taste and imagination of the artist have combined to make it the perfect thing it is. When I was privileged to see it on New Year's Eve I had a gentle shock. I thought that I was going to see a model of a house one-twelfth of the normal size, with all its furniture made to scale—an amazing triumph of ingenuity: I did not realise that I was to see a gem, not only of architecture but of interior decoration. It stood four-square upon a solid trestle, a severely decorated building, apparently of white stone, some 10 feet by 6 feet and 5 or 6 feet high (I did not ask the dimensions). At one end was the garden, brilliant with May flowers and complete even to a bird's nest, the mother bird, and a snail. At the other end was the garage, with a Lanchester car, 14½ inches long, and a number of other cars that answered to their helms even if one could not start them up, a fire-engine, a motor cycle and side-car for the use of the royal butler, and a mowing machine for the lawn. Real water flowed under pressure from the

hose pipe. About the middle of the building was the cellar, stocked as a royal cellar ought to be, and there was real wine in the tiny bottles of the vintages described on their microscopic labels. The beer, I was told, was the only failure. The Bass label was there, but the Bass liquid had been too much for glass as thin as paper and had burst the bottles.

So much for the outside. Sir Edwin touched a button, an electric motor whirred, and the shell of the house ascended to the studio roof, throwing open every room. I have seen photographs of these tiny rooms, and so perfectly has the scale been adhered to that one appears to be looking at the picture of a room of normal size—not an ordinary apartment, for there are few rooms in existence so exquisitely decorated. The hall and the staircase are of marble, the floor of lapis lazuli. The paintings and mural decorations are by Orpen, Lavery, Frampton, and Cope, and there are exquisite ceilings by Nicholson and Haseltine, to mention only a few of the artists who have contributed their work. It is when one comes to the living rooms that the complication of modern life is brought home. We take so much for granted in our modern houses.

Unless we are condemned to make an inventory for a tenant, we are apt to assume that even the simplest life is simple. It is, on the contrary, extraordinarily complicated. The Plantagenet noble, who reared his family in a feudal castle, could make shift with some square yards of tapestry and a few oak stools, a board without china or glass ware, a wooden trencher for his meat. He needed nothing but a hunting knife to eat with: his fingers did the rest. But the Plantagenet noble was content to be cold and dirty and insanitary in his habits. Even the Stuarts and the early Georgians, with all their laced coats and their elegant manners, were content to be cold and unclean. They would set out to take the waters at Epsom and Bath and "the Wells" with little beyond the clothes they stood up in, and they would have taken a prescription of a daily bath as a sentence of execution. How many of the educated classes in the early years of Queen Victoria took a morning bath? One finds the answer in the plumbing arrangements of any house built before 1860. It is the new-born love of warmth and cleanliness and good food, as well as the variety of occupations and amusements, that have made a doll's house of the twentieth century the complicated thing it is.

The drawing-room and the dining-room are triumphs of modern furnishing and decoration. Silken material as fine as gossamer covers the chairs; special tools must have been made for the carving of the wooden backs and legs of chairs, of which the frames have to be thinner than a match to comply with the scale. Every chandelier,



THE QUEEN'S SITTING-ROOM

every metal ornament and fitting has been chased by hand ; every decanter and tumbler cut, one would imagine, under a powerful lens. Beside the dining-room is the strong room for the regalia. We can well understand that Sir Edwin Lutyens could not resist the temptation to reproduce these baubles in miniature in real gold and real stones, even down to the Koh-i-Noor, though the King of England could scarcely be expected to keep such royal decorations at home. Nevertheless, there they are, properly protected by the latest armour against the burglar.

Then we move on a foot or two to the royal bedrooms. Try in imagination to reduce such things as nail scissors and tooth-brushes to one-twelfth the natural size, and you will realise the task which the expert manufacturers undertook. Even the bristles of the brushes had to be reduced to one-twelfth the ordinary thickness. But all the complicated details of a sumptuous dressing-room are there, faithfully reduced to scale ; every drawer fits exactly ; every wardrobe door has its tiny lock ; even Her Majesty's luggage is reproduced in miniature—nothing has been forgotten ! There are sponges and soap in each of the five bathrooms, and the minute taps run hot as well as cold water. So do the taps over the scullery sink.

The kitchen and the scullery are less sensational perhaps, because the eye has been accustomed to see miniature kitchen utensils in every toy-shop window. I remember, however, one object—an egg-cup not much larger than a pea of china, as thin as an egg shell.

The nursery is furnished like a nursery of our dreams, and it is in our solicitude for children in the twentieth century that the future historian will deal most kindly with us. There are toys, of course—all the toys that we now see in the toy-shops, and among them is an exact replica of this doll's house one-twelfth the size. It is a happy touch.

At the farther end of the house are the library and the King's writing-room. In the library for the first time I observed a flaw in the proportion : the books were too large even for folios—but this was not the fault of the bookbinder, but of the authors of the books, of whom there were 171.

Each of the selected authors was invited to write a book specially for the Lilliputian library with his own hands, and the handwriting of certain authors is not easy to discipline to a manuscript the size of a postage stamp. And so, to meet these exigencies, the books were made a little larger than a postage stamp. Most of the well-known names are there, though some preferred to write selections from their published works. Rudyard Kipling illustrated a selection from his poems with original drawings. Thomas Hardy chose twelve of his lyrics. Binyon, Housman, Drinkwater, and Hodgson did the same ;

and among the writers of prose we find Joseph Conrad, Lord Haldane, and Sir J. G. Fraser. The great majority are original compositions. There are works by James Barrie, Arnold Bennett, W. J. Locke, Anthony Hope, A. E. W. Mason, Max Beerbohm, Robert Hichens, Edmund Gosse, and G. K. Chesterton.

As a collection of autographs alone, the library has its value; it will be a gold mine to the future student of twentieth-century calligraphy.

I feel that I know exactly how these distinguished authors did it, because I did it myself. I bought an etching pen that would not hold ink for more than five words without dipping: I put on a strong pair of glasses. Then I found that the little paper volume (the binding was yet to come) would not stay open: it had to be weighted on both sides before I could begin to write, and the weight got in the way of my hand. I was haunted by the doubt whether the story would be long enough to fill the book, or whether the book was large enough for all I intended to write. But I did it—with three pages to spare.

Then came the binder, and from my heart I pity him. If we had all left generous margins, as Arnold Bennett did, he could have clipped down the volume to the scale, say, of a folio, but few of us did that. How he contrived to pare down his Levant Morocco and carry out the tooling of his exquisite designs is marvellous.

But the marvels do not end with the library. On the table in the King's room lies a copy of the *Morning Post* one-twelfth the natural size, and a railway A.B.C., and with a strong glass you can read them both. In the right-hand top drawer of the same table lies His Majesty's cheque-book and a fountain pen, with which it is possible to write, though it is no thicker than a wax match. In the coat room, next the entrance hall, is His Majesty's walking stick, with a gilt top, and stuck in the handle is a gold pencil case, and this pencil also will write. For it is a point of honour that everything in the house, however minute, shall work. Even the electric lift to the top floor works perfectly, which is more than can be said of all the lifts in private houses. In the same room are the King's golf clubs in their carrier, tennis racquets, croquet mallets, and guns—all, of course, by the best makers.

I learned, without surprise, that practically the entire house and all its contents had cost nothing except the enthusiasm of some two or three thousand people who had contributed their time and their skill to the gift to the Queen. How many of them, I wonder, thought that they were contributing to history? When the ungrateful historian of a future century has made use of their labours he will deplore, in a slashing introduction, the lack of foresight in the

THE QUEEN'S BEDROOM

twentieth century, which left to its descendants the model of a royal palace of the day and neglected to leave behind it the model of a lower middle-class house and a workman's dwelling. His researches will not have been deep enough to learn our answer—that under the housing schemes now being considered by the Labour Government, all classes are soon to be living in dwellings on the plan of this doll's house.

Sir Edwin Lutyens has very wisely laid in a stock of duplicates for replacement, but a very obvious danger occurs to me. How are the ravages of moth and worm to be provided against? A single moth, a single worm may do irreparable damage to the gossamer silken fabrics and the slender furniture. A house so rarely furnished and decorated needs almost the whole time of a caretaker of the normal size.

THE WICKER CHAIR

By ALBERT KINROSS

IF Mr Spink had not sat down heavily on one of the wicker chairs which invite those happy mortals who stay at the Hotel Victoria, this story would never have been written, and Edward Lee might never have come up to London. It was after luncheon, and Mr Spink, who had done himself extremely well, went on to the hotel verandah and dropped into the wicker chair. A weatherproof table with a circular top stood at his elbow, and here speedily were deposited a cup of coffee and a dose of green liqueur. Mr Spink now drew out his case, and produced a long cigar with a scarlet band around its middle. The fortunate guest of the Hotel Victoria lighted up, drank his coffee, tossed down his liqueur, and began to contemplate the sad sea waves; for, as you know, the Hotel Victoria faces the yellow sands of Southcliffe, which is a west country seaside place with a season that lasts from July till September. The Hotel Victoria is its most modern and impressive ornament.

Mr Spink had fallen asleep, and was very comfortable when Mrs Spink arrived in all her glory. The magnificent couple were taking exercise in their motor-car that afternoon, and intended to drive as far as a rival health resort, where one could make a stately tea at the Imperial; and then back again to the Victoria.

Mrs Spink aroused her lord and master. His eyes opened; he yawned; he stretched himself; and next he rose. And, simultaneously, something went rip—rip—rip. It was his trousers. These had been caught by a projecting nail, which, somehow, had entered into the system of that wicker chair; and the more you tried to free yourself, the worse it grew. At last Mr Spink parted company with the wicker chair and hastened to his bedroom. He held a newspaper behind him, and his gait lacked much of its usual dignity. The case, viewed as a case, was a very bad one indeed; for, not only did it convict the hotel management of an act of gross neglect, but it had ruined—irretrievably ruined—the one pair of white flannel trousers which Mr Spink possessed, and at least one such pair is indispensable at the seaside. "This could *never* have happened in London," he said to the management. They offered to make good the damage and do anything that lay within their power.

The best thing to do, they pointed out, was to go to Capstick's

in the High Street, who, besides the hosiery, ran a tailoring department plentifully provided with white flannellings. It was not a very smart shop, but Capstick knew his business, and a pair of trousers was no very difficult matter. He might be able to make one up in a couple of days. Mr Spink, in brief, was coaxed and persuaded; and of course the bill must be sent to the office and nowhere else. The hotel people could afford to be indulgent to so good a customer. And thus, at last, instead of wiring to Bond Street, as he had threatened, Mr Spink consented to go round to Capstick's, perhaps to-morrow morning if he felt like it, and see what they could do. He made it a very great favour on his part, and, naturally, the hotel people appeared to be properly and abjectly grateful.

The next morning, after his dip in the ocean, Mr Spink sought out Capstick's. He found a double-fronted shop with a door in the middle, and on one side was displayed the hosiery and on the other the suitings, trouserings, and what not, which are a tailor's stock-in-trade. The prices were marked in plain figures, and were very moderate. "Not so bad," muttered Mr Spink, and entered. He gave his order, and was measured by a timid man, who, it came out, would subsequently cut and make up the material. The trousers would be ready by to-morrow evening, and Mr Spink insisted that he would try them on. "Very well, sir," said the timid man, and left the customer in the hands of his employer. Before dinner next evening Mr Spink was back again.

There was a little room with mirrors behind the shop. Here Mr Spink disrobed and tried on the trousers. They were so excellently made and cut that he became quite enthusiastic.

"How much are you getting here?" he asked of the timid man.

"Five pounds a week, sir."

The two were alone in the little room with mirrors, for Mr Capstick was waiting on a customer.

"I'll give you ten, and you can start on the 1st of October," announced Mr Spink. "Here is my business card—I dare say you've heard of us. You're wasted here."

Edward Lee—for so henceforth we must call the timid man—had always felt that he was wasted. He looked at the card now, and took hope. "The Brummel Tailoring and Clothing Company," it said, and it gave the address of the company's headquarters and of a dozen branches. . . . "'Managing Director, Mr Alfred Spink'—that's me," the customer had remarked with a royal flourish. "I want a good man. You'll do."

And that was all there was to it, if one except the delight of Edward Lee. His chance, he felt, had come at last; from the 1st of October he would be employed in London at double the wages he was getting here.

II

It was not so easy to be quit of Southcliffe as it had seemed, and Edward Lee knew nobody at all in London, which made matters more complicated still. He would store his furniture and look around there, he decided, and, the matter being broached, he discovered that his agreement with Mr Capstick provided for three months' notice on either side. In default you had to pay, and this payment swallowed up the bulk of Edward's ready money. He got out of his house easily enough, but here he had only a weekly tenancy and could depart whensoever he pleased. And next, there were bills to pay—small sums, taken one by one ; but, added up, they made a formidable total. He learnt also that Mrs Lee enjoyed credit at the draper's, the chemist's, and the ironmonger's, and that, now they were leaving, these gentry demanded a settlement in cash. So that, taken altogether, it was not a very flourishing Lee family which arrived in London. Still, there was ten pounds to come at the end of the first week; and so, regularly, ever afterwards. Soon they would be able to redeem the remnant of their furniture and put money in the bank.

Edward deposited his family in furnished lodgings at an address recommended by a railway porter, and then he set out for the head office of the Brummel Tailoring and Clothing Company. He was admitted into Mr Spink's presence after a long wait.

" Good ! " said that gentleman, eyeing him up and down. " You can begin at once—always a rush on in the autumn. Mr Nichols will attend to you. Eight pounds a week, Nichols." The chief was addressing a lean and wilted man who seemed to be some kind of clerk.

" But you said ten, sir," ventured Edward Lee.

Mr Spink might have been a brick wall, or deaf and dumb ; he simply took no notice.

From that moment Edward Lee's new career may be said to have begun in earnest. Mr Nichols had somehow steered him out of the office, and they were back in the shabby ante-room where he had waited. Mr Nichols told him that he would start at the Edgware Road branch, which, just now, was short-handed. He had better report himself at once and get to work. There was the address, written out on a slip of paper, and Edward Lee was told to take the tube or else a bus. Confused, dejected, he found himself in the street again, and two pounds a week the poorer. Of course he ought to have stood out for his rights ; but the other man was so much the master of the situation, and there was his place gone in Southcliffe, the furniture they had not been obliged to sell in store, and Mrs Lee

and the children all housed within those dingy and expensive lodgings. Eight pounds a week, however—there still remained this scrap of comfort—was ever so much better than five.

He reached the Edgware Road, and at once was given work in plenty. They seemed to be in arrears there, and hustle was the word. In a week, he measured, cut, booked, and tried on more clothing than he had done at Southcliffe in a month, so that actually he ought to have been getting twenty pounds a week instead of eight. And there were jobs that he had to take home at night and sit up with, wasting eyes and gaslight after his " tea." The Brummel Company seemed to be insatiable, a huge machine, and he was fairly in the jaws of it. Yet at the end of each week he received his eight pounds ; and he felt that he had earned them.

Martha Lee had gone off into a terrible rage when Edward told her how they had been " done " ; for that was how they put it. But beggars can't be choosers, they had agreed. " We'll find another job," they said, " and show him." " Him," of course, was Mr Spink. Meanwhile, and before they could settle with this patron, they had to find other quarters ; and the best they could do in this direction for the present was a furnished " upper part " at an address in Kilburn.

They had the two top floors of a house in a shabby street : the place was clean enough when you got inside and were safely shut off from the tenants of the lower half of it. They had three bedrooms, a sitting-room, a kitchen, and a tiny room with a bath and geyser ; and there was gas everywhere, and even in the fireplaces. " It'll make the work easy," said Mrs Lee, who was beginning to wonder whether they would be able to afford some help. She did not wonder long. The upper part alone cost fifty shillings a week, and you got your heat and light by means of a shilling-in-the-slot meter. This meter ate money. It was not so bad at first ; but when the cold weather came and gas-fires and long evenings and plenty of hot water, it started business. They had looked over cheaper places in their neighbourhood, floors and fractions of old and outworn houses that had once been decent and let to a single family. Now these were divided off and subdivided, sheltering a noisy and unclean swarm, whom the Lees, fresh from Southcliffe, regarded as little better than naked savages. It was impossible to live like that, and so they had decided to risk the furnished upper part. They would scrape and save until they had the money to get the remnant of their furniture and buy the new things to fill in. Then they would take a place of their very own. Mrs Lee would spy round and choose it. Edward, poor fellow, had little time for choosing anything just at present.

III

When Christmas came and with it the slack season, Edward Lee was given a week's notice. The manager was very sorry, but he was only doing as he was told. Four other men besides Edward Lee were flung out of the Edgware Road branch. " You'll soon get another job," said the manager, " you see if you don't." But there was no job going, nor any chance of one, till what is called the " spring season," and Edward Lee wore out shoe leather and said dreadful things of Mr Spink. When the New Year's Honours List came out in the papers, he saw that Mr Spink had been knighted by a grateful Sovereign, and must be addressed as Sir Alfred, while his wife became Lady Spink. Edward Lee, like a good many other people, was very much impressed by it, and especially by the brief account of the new knight's munificent donations to the Hospital Fund and the Walworth Shelters. It was Mrs Lee who suggested that Edward should write now and offer his congratulations, and, at the same time, explain how he had been turned out of the Edgware Road branch. And it was all Sir Alfred's doing that he had given up a good berth in the country and come up to London. Sir Alfred was responsible, they wrote, and Sir Alfred must help them. . . . The composition of this letter took them the whole of one cold January afternoon. It was sealed, stamped and posted, and for a day or two hope ruled high. No answer came, however ; and it was just as though they had never written. The only important thing they got just then was a bill connected with the quarter's storage of the furniture.

They told the man to sell this furniture, and the sum realised helped them along into February. It was a bitter cold winter, and Edward Lee, with heaps of leisure, now sat at home all day by the fire and interfered with Mrs Lee and the children. He grew touchy and quarrelsome, and so did Mrs Lee. They were very unhappy now, and each accused the other of having instigated the move to London, till Edward Lee, wretched and worse than wretched, would fling out in a huff and read himself silly at a public library.

One bleak afternoon he came back with the news that he had found a job with a repairing tailor. It was only four pounds a week, but he must take it. This would tide them over until April, when he would be sure to find a really good billet. He sat now cross-legged all day in the window of a shabby shop and sewed on patches when he was not ironing and pressing. Or he put new velvet collars on to old overcoats, or new linings into old jackets and waistcoats. Sometimes the children would come to the window and watch him at his work, and Martha Lee brought him his dinner and tried her hardest not to cry. And almost every shilling he brought home was

swallowed by that furnished upper part. They talked each week of getting out of it, but now they were deep in the books of five of the neighbouring tradesmen, and it was easier to stay. In April they would move, when Edward found the good job he anticipated. He would try for one of the better class shops this time, and avoid all companies and large concerns that treated a man as though he were so much dirt.

In the last week of March they received notice to quit the furnished upper part. They had got behindhand with their rent, and the owner had grown tired of their excuses. He did not believe in the new job that was to blossom in April—he believed only in his money, and that was overdue—out they must go by Monday at the latest.

On the Tuesday Edward Lee sought a personal interview with Sir Alfred Spink. The new knight could not see him, however, and it was suggested that he should put his business into writing.

" I've written once," said Edward.

" That's Mr Nichol's message," replied the clerk.

Edward's own message it appeared, therefore, had not even got so far as Sir Alfred Spink—only to Mr Nichols.

In desperation Edward used a lot of bad language, and was firmly and severely told to get out unless he wished to be given in charge. He did not wish to be given in charge, and so he went.

At home he found a letter awaiting him from Jesse Philpot, who was part owner of the little storage and removal concern at Southcliffe. Philpot was quite an acquaintance of his, and this is what he wrote:—

" Mr Capstick's new man has proved unsatisfactory. The poor fellow came here because of his bad health and the doctor had told him to find a job at the seaside. He's in the cottage hospital now, there's something wrong with his stomach ; and Mr Capstick came in here yesterday and said, ' I'd give any money to get Edward Lee back.' He's that short-handed and behindhand with his orders and customers waiting, and he can't get a good man here. I'm telling you this in case you feel that London isn't exactly like you hoped to find it. . . ."

" He guessed something was wrong because we sold the furniture," exclaimed Mrs Lee. " Now you go off and tell Mr Philpot to tell Mr Capstick to write to you. Just drop him a hint like. If you write straight to Mr Capstick you're done."

" That's good advice," said Edward, and forthwith acted on it.

On the Friday he received a letter from Mr Capstick, who said that, if he came back, there would be six pound a week for him, and, if he stayed, they would divide the forfeit money paid last year.

" Make it seven," Mrs Lee wired back in answer.

There came a swift reply : " Agreed, Capstick."

IV

It all looked like rose-colour on top, but as they sat there on that Saturday night discussing the Monday when they were to be turned out, the rose-colour faded.

" How are we going to get to Southcliffe ? " asked Mrs Lee.

" We've pawned everything," said Edward, " and, having acted that independent, we can't ask Mr Capstick for a sub. And if we go out and sell this furniture, it's thieving."

There was nothing, absolutely nothing, they could lay their hands on, except Edward's week's wages, which belonged to everybody but Edward, and had partly gone to appease the five tradesmen and buy the Sunday dinner. There was not enough left for them all to escape from their prison and get back to Southcliffe on the train.

" Supposing you go alone," said Mrs Lee, " and me and the children'll come after. You could borrow and send us a pound or two."

" And you turned out o' here, and pigging it in London ! "

" That's what we'll have to do." And it looked as though Mrs Lee was right, till Edward, going into the kitchen before bedtime to fill the boiler, discovered the burglar.

The fellow was skulking behind the kitchen door. And he had got in by the window, which communicated with a small back garden, and a ladder left outdoors by their mysterious neighbours in the lower half of this divided house.

The burglar, though ever afterwards described by Mrs Lee as " the burglar," was not a very convincing specimen. A more just conversationalist would have placed him among the sneak thieves and the feebler types of criminal. He was very young and almost boyish.

" What are you doin' here ? " asked Edward Lee, perplexed. For it did not occur to him at the moment that anybody could be such a fool as to try and burgle *them*.

" All right, guv'nor," said the young fellow, " all right. I was only 'avin' a look roun'."

The two men stood silent for a moment, the only sound between them being a click that came out of the gas meter. And then Edward Lee realised suddenly the exact nature of this emissary and the part Providence had played in sending him.

" That's the gas I just lit," said Edward Lee.

" I'm goin' 'ome agin," said the burglar. And he produced a two-foot jemmy, wherewith he threatened Edward Lee. It was a dangerous weapon, hard and shiny.

For answer Edward caught the burglar by the throat and flung him down and banged his head against the stonework of the kitchen

floor. He wrenched the jemmy away, and sat on the other's chest.

"All right, guv'nor, all right," whined the burglar. "I was just off—I didn' mean no 'arm. If you was cruel poor an' starvin' . . ."

There was a something in this primitive appeal which touched poor Edward Lee.

"Will you go back to where you came from, if I let you go?" he asked.

"'Struth, I will," answered the burglar.

Edward Lee rose from the other's thin chest and stood aside.

The burglar, released, made for the jemmy.

"No, you don't," said Edward Lee, securing that weapon himself and holding it fast.

"Who's that you're talking to?" inquired a voice. It was the voice of Mrs Lee, though those who had only known Mrs Lee outdoors or in society might not have recognised the shape that next appeared within the doorway.

"I caught this fellow here—come to steal," replied Edward.

"A burglar!" cried Mrs Lee, "and come to burgle us!" The idea was so preposterous that she burst into a fit of laughter.

The burglar, meanwhile, had retired to the open window.

"He's going!" shouted Mrs Lee.

"Let him go," answered Edward; and the burglar, seizing his opportunity, went.

The gas meter gave another click, and Edward held the jemmy.

"I know what," he said; "you go back to your bed."

"Not me," answered Martha Lee. "I'll pull the blind down."

"There's seventy shillings if there's a farthing tucked away in that gas meter."

"The men'll come for it next week," answered Martha Lee.

The window was shut, the blind down, and the gas turned off when they got to work. Martha Lee held the candle. . . .

"Sixty - two — sixty - three," announced Edward, finishing the counting. "And all in shillings. That's near six pounds with what we've got. It'll do it. . . ."

They were back again in Southcliffe on the Sunday evening. It is a good day for such unceremonious migrations—the best day of the seven.

Within a year the Lees had repaid everybody, including the gas company. The only debt they left behind in London was the one they owed Sir Alfred Spink and the wicker chair.

LONDON'S CLUB-LAND

By TERENCE SHIEL

THERE are many people who declare that the England of a decade hence will be a country fundamentally transformed, barely recognisable as the stronghold of tradition and custom it still is to-day; but such prophets do not get much of a hearing in St James's Street, Piccadilly, and Pall Mall. A very remarkable illustration has just been given of the apparent equanimity, not to say unconquerable optimism, which still prevails in the highways of London's Club-land. The Carlton Club—founded in 1832, with the great Duke of Wellington as its Chairman, to enable the Conservative Party to counteract the political activities of the Liberal Club, "Brooks's"—has been carrying out a scheme of structural alteration, which suggests complete confidence in its own vitality. It has now extended its premises up to Carlton House Terrace, the better to accommodate lady visitors, and it has incurred an expenditure of £60,000 for the renovation of its façade!

There is—at first sight, at least—something delightfully British in this imperturbability: the whole of Europe apprehensive of some new world-wide catastrophe, England with nearly 1,000,000 workers unemployed, a Socialist Government in power, and the Carlton Club calmly enlarges and embellishes itself regardless of cost! At first sight, but some circumstances which have become known put a slightly different complexion upon the affair. To begin with, the lease of the Club's building had drawn to its close and its renewal was contingent upon some such restoration as is in progress. Secondly, most of the money for the façade is being furnished by a millionaire member, the well-known financier, Sir H. Mallaby-Deeley. Thirdly, the new premises, it is calculated, will enable the Club to meet its current expenses much more easily. What is being done, therefore, would appear to be the outcome of a far-sighted opportunism rather than of blindness to the perils which impend.

Supposing that those prophets prove right, and that, in the course of the coming social and political revolution, our English Conservative Party shall have evaporated by 1933—or 1943—there are sure, at least, to be plenty of rich people in the country, and the

renovated Carlton may serve new purposes. Even if the old Club-land shall have been uprooted, there will, doubtless, be room for a new Club-land, *à l'Américane.* Indeed, the Carlton's next-door neighbour, the Royal Automobile Club, with its fashionable restaurant and charming concert-hall and splendid swimming bath, may be said to have initiated the change already.

How wonderfully London's Club-land has grown and changed and multiplied within the last hundred years! In 1833 there were only about a score of Clubs, properly so-called. Now there are some three hundred, of which thirty are for ladies.

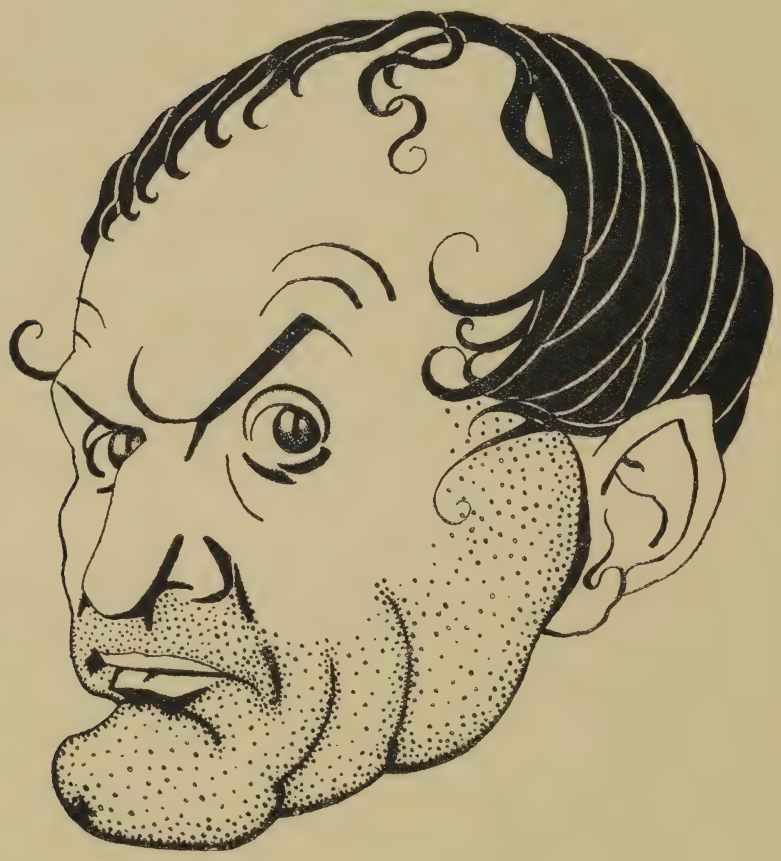
Of all our institutions, it has been remarked, none have been more vitally and essentially English than our Parliament and our Clubs, and yet the former grew directly out of the victory over a British sovereign of a foreign-bred baron, a French Count's son, while the latter owes its origin to an Italian refugee. It was in truth one Francesco Bianco who, in 1693, founded near the Pall Mall end of St James's Street the "Chocolate House," which some forty years later was to become famous as "White's Club." "Arthur's" and "Boodle's," kindred establishments, are nearly as old as "White's," and still keep up some of their dignified eighteenth-century traditions, while holding more aloof from politics than in old days. "Brooks's" continues to be the resort of the Whig peers and landowners, while attracting many of the rich Liberal merchants and professional men, who prefer an atmosphere more distinguished and exclusive than that of the "Reform." Not that the "Reform" is undiscriminating in its acceptance of candidates. Some very successful men have been black-balled there, to their own astonishment and chagrin, on the ground of ineligibility from a Club standpoint. But, while the National Liberal Club regards it as Whiggish and snobbish, the "Reform," in the eyes of "Brooks's," still seems a trifle too democratic.

What really may be expected to be the fate of the Clubs when England becomes Socialist? An establishment like the "Athenæum"—that meeting-place for our leading statesmen and lawyers and dignitaries of the Church, our great physicians and artists and writers, and men of eminence of every kind—will have, of course, its *raison d'être* always. The same may be said for the St James's Club, in which diplomatists congregate; and for the "Travellers'" possibly, though it scarcely lives up to its name; possibly also for the Royal Societies' Club, which partakes to some extent of the nature of all these three—Sven Hedin and Nansen are among its members. Professional Clubs, like the "Garrick" and the "Authors'," will always seem in place, as will also such clubs as the "Sports," the "Alpine," and the "Thames Yacht," and the scores of others which

cater for some special class or special needs. It is difficult, however, to foresee a long life under Socialism for those time-honoured institutions, of which the "Carlton" and "Boodle's" may be taken as arch-types. As for the Naval and Military Clubs—in some ways the most characteristically British of all—their future depends obviously upon the growth of the international mind. There are among the guiding spirits of the Labour Party in England two or three able and experienced soldiers of high rank, who regard disarmament as a practical and urgent problem—as an aim to be striven for unrestingly, and quite conceivably to be achieved by the rising generation. In the eyes of their brother officers these men are, of course, absolute lunatics. The Naval and Military Clubs, one and all, regard themselves as not less stable than the Bank of England.

Americans, who always hold out so generous a welcome to visitors, find our Clubs disconcertingly inhospitable and our club-men incredibly unsociable, even among themselves. Every one knows the story of the new member of a London club who asked the old member the way to the dining-room. The old member was struck speechless with emotion. He had been in the club for forty years and no other fellow member had ever addressed him before! Even in those weeks of August and September, during which there is a mutual exchange of hospitality between certain clubs to facilitate the "autumn cleaning," there is no departure from this traditional unsociability. If you are a member of the "Reform," say, and, as such, are making use of the "Devonshire," you must not expect any Devonshire Club member to take any notice of your existence, unless you and he have been formally introduced. Many tales are told in illustration of the attitude of armed neutrality, or of undisguised disfavour, adopted by the London club-man in these circumstances. On one occasion, it is related, a peppery old General at the United Service Club, Pall Mall, missed his umbrella at the time when the Club premises had been placed at the disposal of the members of the "Athenæum," over the way. "I knew how it would be," he exclaimed testily, "with all these damned Bishops about!"

SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



I. Mr WALTER DE LA MARE

By Powys Evans

LATE

By WALTER DE LA MARE

Three small men in a small house,
  And none to hear them say,
" One for his nob," and " One for his noddle,"
  And " One for his dumb dog Stray ! "
" Clubs are trumps—he's dealt and bluffed : "
  " And jack of diamonds led : "
" And perhaps the cullie has dropped a shoe ;
  He tarries so late," they said.

Three small men in a small house,
  And one small empty chair,
One with his moleskin over his brows,
  One with his crany bare,
And one with a dismal cast in his eye,
  Rocking a heavy head. . . .
" And perhaps the cullie's at *The Wide World's End* :
  He tarries so late," they said.

Three small men in a small house,
  And a candle guttering low,
One with his cheek on the ace of spades,
  And two on the boards below.
And a window black 'gainst a waste of stars,
  And a moon five dark nights dead . . .
" Who's that a-knocking and a-knocking and
    a-knocking ? "
  One stirred in his sleep and said.

*** *From a new edition of "Peacock Pie" shortly to be published by Messrs Constable & Co.*

ARIEL

By FILSON YOUNG

HAVING resisted the temptations of the mechanical piano-player and the gramophone, I have fallen to Wireless, and my study, hitherto sacred to books and pictures and the apparatus of writing and smoking and the means of making music, has now been invaded by a little magic cabinet by means of which, on the manipulation of certain knobs and plugs, I am nightly in communication with the wonders or inanities of the ether.

Like all converts who have swallowed a long-resisted dose and found that it is not, after all, a deadly poison, I am eager to bring others to share my weakness, or glory, or shame, or whatever it is. I do not regret the gramophone or the pianola because I spent years of my life in developing the art of making music for myself—in my head, on paper, or on an instrument ; but I am secretly glad about the wireless. I rejoice that I can still fall ; I am glad to think that my sympathies still prevail against my prejudices, and that my likings are stronger than my dislikes. I revel in the easy flattery of the wireless cabinet, which makes me believe that I am engaged in scientific research when I turn the knobs. I know nothing of anodes, gridleaks, reactions, condensers, oscillations, induction, variometers, or super-heterodynes ; all these words (except the last) mean something to me, but they mean something quite different from what they mean to the instructed wireless amateur whose aerials thread the skies above suburban back gardens. They are excellent mysteries.

Presently (such is my vice) I will tamper with them ; already the various productions of the wireless periodical Press strew my floor ; but greedily as I read them, their jargon passes as yet over my head like summer lightning ; I do not understand them, and I do not (yet) want to. For the moment the verbiage of them is enough for me. For example, in a kind of wireless Shorter Catechism, which has for me the double glamour of dogma and mystery, I read :

Q. Why is it that some Low-frequency Amplifiers are very prone to howling ?

A. When several stages of low-frequency amplification are used, the inherent reaction effects in the circuit become more pronounced, and produce a tendency to self-oscillation at audible frequencies.

This melancholy vice of the Low-frequency Amplifier, while in every way deplorable, leaves me, in my crass ignorance, stone cold. Enough for me that I can pretend, as I turn my knobs, that I am bridling the great waves of the infinite ether, although, of course, they have been tamed and bridled for me at the other end ; enough that I can silence the howling of the amplifier by a turn of the wrist ; enough that when I hear the pleasant tones in my ear saying, " London calling ; Mr Elijah Gumble will give us a ten minutes' talk on turnip growing," I feel that it is I and not Messrs Herz and Marconi who have performed a miracle and brought the ghostly presence of Mr Gumble to my room.

In the course of my brief initiation certain secrets have been revealed to me. I now understand why small shops, which seem to have failed at every other trade and passed through various declensions, can apparently recover prosperity by displaying little saucers full of brass terminals, nuts, screws, wires, and the various components and accessories of which wireless sets are constructed. I even understand why it is that people stand fascinated and gazing at these humble windows and the contents of their saucers, although I do not understand how people can make a living by selling brass terminals at fourpence a dozen. But all these bright little objects are part of the great comprehensive flattery that wins for wireless such an army of enthusiasts. The child or the primitive man in us rejoices to make something, to put things together ; and there is no toy in regard to which the preparation for putting things together has been brought to such an elaborate perfection as the wireless receiving set.

True, I have not yet succumbed to the craze of making for myself ; but nothing, I feel, is impossible if the fever gets a sufficient hold of me. It is not that I am athirst to hear what Mr Gumble says, to listen to the talk of the Women's Hour or the Children's Corner, or even to know what the barometer readings may be at half-past nine o'clock in Manchester or Birmingham. It is that within the bounds of the really excellent variety of the British Broadcasting Company's programme I can, without moving from my chair, choose what I shall and shall not hear. I can watch the clock and meditate upon quite other things whilst the unheard music of a jazz band is desecrating the ether ; and, in a silence as profound as the sea's depths, wait for the moment when I shall turn a switch and hear the liquid notes of a Beethoven wood-wind Trio fall like evening dew on my spirit.

Here, I think (speaking as a convert and special pleader), is one secret of the charm of wireless. You can take part, in the privacy

of your chamber, in the things about which the world all round you is agog, without joining physically in the crowd-movement, the stimulated and worked-up enthusiasm that repels a certain type of mind and tends to shut one out from participation in the popular things of one's own day. Subtle wireless! First it flatters you, telling you that you are a scientist; then it deceives you, telling you that you are in a company; then it lulls you, telling you that you are alone. But really you are not alone; you are one with the crowd spirit, and are brought out of your perhaps priggish solitude to share in the homely cheer that is making thousands of your fellows glad. That, if you have too great a tendency to solitude, too sensitive an instinct to escape from what is common, is surely good for you. I know that it is good for me.

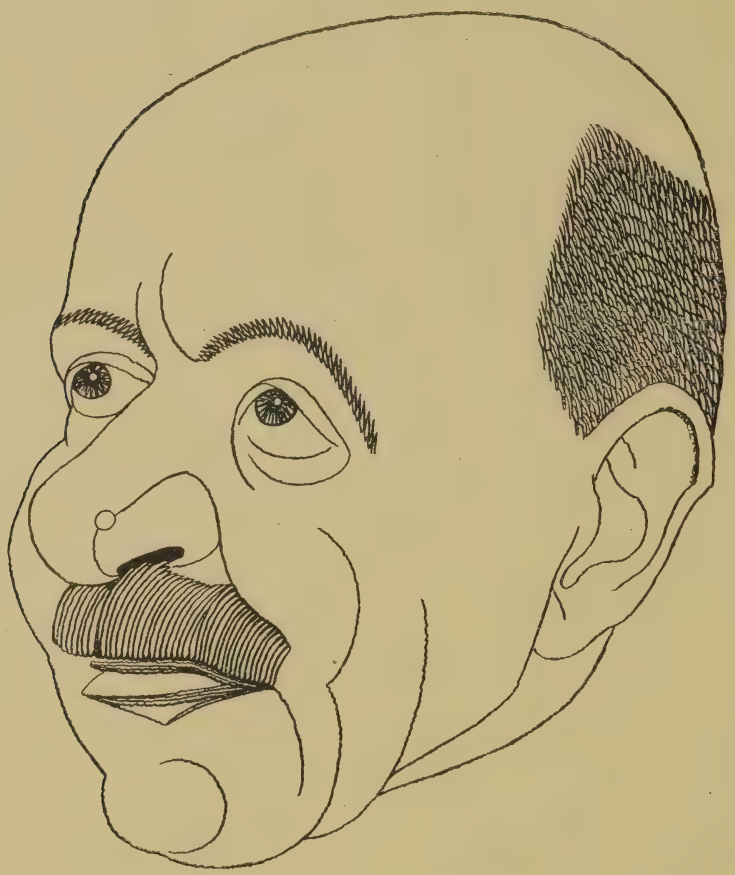
Caliban: Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices. . . .

Stefano: This will prove a brave Kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing.

It is only when you use it yourself that you realise what this boon may mean to people who are solitary, not from choice or temperament, but from circumstances; who sit bravely alone, shut out by infirmity, or age, or blindness, or poverty from the world's gossip and entertainment, trying to make the best of their little maimed lives. At a cost of a few pounds, it brings them daily into the company of their fellows, into the warmth of the fire, into the sunlight, into the enchanted world of things outside themselves.

The very concentration of the wireless art upon one sense stimulates the others. Physical hearing, in the absence of seeing, stimulates the mental vision; the living voices can be clothed with personalities without fear of the perhaps painful physical contradiction of sight; while great orchestral music, freed from the distractions of the concert room, speaks its message impersonally, as it should, to you alone. The immense possibilities of broadcasting have not yet even dimly been realised—possibilities of mind-stultification and corruption, as well as the greater possibilities of enlightenment and education. Will it take the place of the evening newspaper? Will the myriad listeners-in be advertised at? How many people will go to church when they can hear perfect music and the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard from their own armchairs. . . . ? But I must come down from such wide speculations. I must earth my aerial.

SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



II. Mr E. H. LACON WATSON

By Powys Evans

MARJORIE'S MATCH

By E. H. LACON WATSON

"WELL, what did you think of him?" I asked, as Marjorie came in. Not that I particularly wanted to know, but women expect you to take a decent interest in their affairs. And I knew she had been to the Bastables for tea, to talk over Molly's engagement.

She shook her head decisively. "It won't do," she said with firmness. "The man is hopeless. I could see it at once. Why she ever let herself in for it I can't imagine."

"Having done so, I suppose she will have to go through with the job," I said, for I dislike non-fulfilment of any contract. I laid down the book I was reading, so that I could take it up again at the right place when Marjorie was gone. From her expression I could see that there was plenty more to come: it would be lucky if I were left in peace again under half an hour. Certain lines about the mouth indicated that her mind had been made up irrevocably. Young married women should beware of these marks: they are sometimes difficult to eradicate.

"I don't see why, at all," she said sharply. "The man isn't a gentleman. Any one could see that with half an eye."

Now, I happen to have known Packe—the man we were discussing—for many years. He is, I admit, a bit of a Bohemian. But to say he is not a gentleman is ridiculous. His family vault is one of the features of Aston-le-Packe: a hundred deceased Packes would turn in it at the thought.

"Tut, tut," I said, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "What has the poor fellow been doing now?"

Marjorie answered, perhaps before considering.

"He paid no more attention to me," she declared, "than if I had been—nobody at all. He hardly even looked at me."

Then, indeed, I saw that poor Packe had made the mistake of his life, because Marjorie happened to be wearing a new hat that afternoon. Still, it was my business to speak up for absent friends. I did my best.

"Isn't it a little unreasonable," I suggested gently, "when a man has just got engaged to some one else——"

She cut me short. "Don't be absurd! Of course, I never meant that. But he might get his hair cut. I never saw any one look so—shaggy. I do like to see a man well groomed. So does Molly. That's the rotten part of it. For her to go and get engaged to a man like that, when all the time——"

She stopped abruptly. I lit a cigarette.

"When all the time——" I prompted her.

"You know what I was going to say," she protested.

"I suppose you mean that she might have that dear little poodle who was here the other day," I said. "Something between a poodle and a hairdresser. I despise him so much that I am glad to say I forgot his name—Captain something-or-other. A Lancer, for a dollar."

This, you must understand, was not more than half serious. I was accustomed to chaff Marjorie about her predilection for that particular branch of the service. It dated from long before the war, but even that universal cataclysm did not altogether eradicate it. Between ourselves, I think there must have been passages—in the past. Any way, she still has a notion that all the really eligible young men of the country belong to that renowned corps. They have a look, a *je ne sais quoi*, that differentiates them at a glance from the rest of mankind. Marjorie is fond of asserting that she can tell them at a glance from all other regiments, in any kit. They invariably look Smart.

All this, of course, she explained to me. And also that my poor friend Packe would never look smart, not if he spent the rest of his natural life in the attempt. I could not quite make out whether she would have liked him to try or not. A really heroic course of grooming, I suggested, might yet work wonders with Packe, who was a well-built, personable figure of a man. She shook her head.

"If it isn't in a man," she explained, "nothing on earth will do any good."

"We might even get him into the Lancers," I hinted. "He served during the war—got wounded, too. Your little man was picking up decorations on the staff."

"Silly!" she said. "As if that could possibly make any difference, now."

She left me with the impression that a Lancer was nothing unless entered in his first youth.

II

Packe came in to tea the next Sunday afternoon. We receive friends, to a certain extent, on that day. That is to say, we tell them that they will generally find us at home then, and they reply

that, curiously enough, it is also their day for staying at home. Some of them say this regretfully; some with an air of superior piety. However, we get an occasional stray bachelor. Sometimes, swayed by a mysterious telepathy, a whole crowd of acquaintances decide to pay us a simultaneous visit, and our stock of tea-cups can only be made equal to the occasion by bringing into play old and half-forgotten wedding presents. This is by the way. Packe came, I imagine, because Molly had hinted that a formal call might be useful.

I am sorry to say that Marjorie received him very coldly. He had no real opportunity of producing a good impression. It so happened that we were more than ordinarily full that afternoon, and when there is anything of a crowd Packe always has the air of being hopelessly in the way. He dropped one cup on the floor and sent a muffin sliding into the lap of an elderly lady. Then I took him upstairs to the smoking-room, so that he shouldn't compromise himself any further.

Alone with me in the smoking-room he fairly let himself go. I know I used to talk a lot of rubbish myself when Marjorie and I were first engaged, and I have heard others since in similar case talk about their love affairs at considerable length and with great energy. But Packe beat the crowd. He had a sort of literary training, for one thing, and then he was clearly very much in love as well. I had to point out one or two defects in the young lady's character, and this never failed to rouse him to an almost dangerous pitch. Of course I had known Molly Bastable for years, and felt I could speak freely. She is a dear little girl, but deficient in stamina. She seems to me to let Marjorie rule her too easily. This may or may not be good for her, but I am convinced it is bad for Marjorie herself.

My wife sometimes behaves as though she held a lever that controlled the mechanism of the world.

"I know, I know," I repeated hastily, for Packe was looking uncommonly fierce. "Perfectly charming, as you say. But I wish she had a little more backbone."

He flushed, as though the suggestion of additional vertebræ were something indecent. Perhaps wisely, he refused to stay till supper.

III

For some time I saw nothing more of him. But Marjorie was very busy. We had the little captain, whose name I pretended to have forgotten (it was Twysden, as a matter of fact), perpetually hanging about the house for the next few weeks. And, by a curious coincidence, Molly Bastable looked in for tea most times he happened

to be there. Of course, I could see what was going on easily enough. I know Marjorie pretty well by now.

"You seem to be putting your oar in fairly deep," I said. "Take care you don't catch a crab."

When Marjorie fails to understand an allusion she discreetly ignores it and turns to something else. Thus she answered :—

"If you would only help a little. Molly thinks an awful lot of you. She would really pay attention to anything you said."

It struck me as the most bare-faced suggestion I had ever heard —even from Marjorie.

"I'm on the other side," I explained; "for the defence. In fact, I support the opposition candidate."

Marjorie and I are always very frank in our dealings. We do not quarrel, much—though our friends always appear to think we must be on the verge of appearing in the divorce court.

"Do you?" she scoffed. "You'll get horribly beaten. Molly doesn't really like your old thing a bit. I'll bet you a new hat she's engaged to my man within a fortnight."

"If she is it will be a public scandal," I said. "And entirely your doing, too."

Marjorie said, with a great air of worldly wisdom, that she did not hold with a girl ruining her whole life for the sake of an absurd convention. She proceeded to institute several unflattering comparisons. Packe, indeed! A novelist, unknown except to a few enthusiasts, who made, perhaps, five hundred a year at the outside.

"He has some private means," I protested. "So has she. And this Twysden, what has he ever done? He may have more money, but his brains are those of a second-class rabbit. Now, Packe is a rising man."

She fell back upon her first line of defence.

"Captain Twysden is a gentleman," she said. "Besides, he has fifteen hundred a year of his own."

"When we married," I remarked, "we had just three hundred a year between us."

She came swiftly across the room and kissed me on the forehead. That is sometimes her way of concluding an argument when she is not getting the best of it.

"You were different," she said. "Any one could see you were bound to get on. You are so clever."

What is a man to say to that kind of thing? I let it go at that, although the word "clever" does not, I maintain, adequately describe me.

"I don't like your candidate," I said afterwards. "And I warn

you against attempting to play the part of Providence. Suppose she marries him, and then finds out she is miserable."

"She won't," said Marjorie briskly. "You men don't understand these things. Go and write one of your silly articles. Have I ever made a mistake yet? You know, I can always tell when a man is the right sort."

She nodded her pretty head wisely. I doubt if I have ever met any one quite so confident of the correctness of her opinion on all subjects as Marjorie. She confesses to me sometimes, with a sort of fearful pride, that she has an Instinct in these matters.

IV

A fortnight later I met Packe on the Embankment. That is to say, I saw a melancholy looking figure leaning over the parapet and gazing at the water, not far from Cleopatra's Needle. I did not recognise it as Packe until I got quite close, for it is not his habit to lean over parapets: usually he walks at a great pace, with the air of a man who is full of energy and anxious to get to work as soon as possible. He turned as I approached, and his face gave me a start.

"What on earth's the matter?" I asked.

And then he told me, by degrees, or rather, I extracted the truth from him. We walked, I remember, in the Embankment gardens, where they were hard at work pulling down some emergency annexe to a Government Office, and found a retired spot where there was an unoccupied seat that had probably been built over, like the statues. Of course I could see at first sight what had happened: it was quite clear that the engagement had been broken off. Molly had written, it seemed, hinting that her opinions had undergone a change; and he had replied, perhaps rather hastily, on the spur of the moment; and now his world lay in ruins. Of course they would always be friends, wrote Molly. I could see her writing it. But she did not think she could care for him in that way. I have always suspected her of getting these expressions out of some novel.

"And so that's over," he said drearily.

"Well, no—not necessarily," I interposed. "As I read it, the game is only just beginning. Assuming, that is, that you still want to marry the girl."

He gave a short, angry laugh. "You don't seem to have the smallest idea of what love means," he said.

"Possibly not. In ten years young men will, no doubt, be saying the same to you. But I know something about Molly. She talks of making up her mind. My dear man, she has no mind to

make up. She's at the mercy of the last person who gets hold of her. A dear girl, but——"

Packe wheeled round sharply. "I'm not going to let you or any one else say a word against her," he barked.

"All right, my firebrand. No harm meant. What I was trying to point out was that she is quite liable to veer round again in a few weeks. Give her time."

He still seemed touchy on the subject, so I did not pursue it further.

"I wish I could think I had a dog's chance," he said gloomily.

"All you have to do is to make a splash," I counselled him. "Write something that hits the public in the eye. Get there with both feet. And I'll bet you'll see little Molly switch round like a weathercock."

"I wish to heaven you wouldn't——" he began again angrily.

"Sorry, old man. Slipped out quite by accident. Hang it—you must remember I've known the girl practically since she wore long clothes."

He simmered down. "I don't feel as if I could write at all now," he said. "This business seems to have knocked all the stuffing out of me. I can't think of anything. My mind's a blank."

"One has only to look at life," I said sententiously. "To the mind of the artist life is nothing but a bundle of plots for novels."

He sighed. "I can't get a single idea."

"Nonsense!" I said. "There are thousands all round you. Why, take this affair of your own! There's a full-blown novel there, asking to be done by the right man. What a study of character! Contrast of the two men, and the two women."

I could see the look of introspection mount in his eye. Then he recollected himself, and snarled.

"Sometimes I doubt whether you possess such a thing as a heart," he said bitterly as he turned away. And that was the last I saw of Packe for some weeks.

V

"Molly may thank me for being well out of that," said Marjorie to me after dinner. "I never thought she would have the pluck to break it off."

"If she could have seen poor Packe's face this afternoon," I began.

She shook her head. "My dear boy, he would never have done. I saw he was impossible from the first."

"When he failed to see your new hat, you mean."

"She told me to-day," pursued Marjorie, unchecked, "that she likes Eric better and better every time she meets him."

"Who the deuce is Eric?" I asked.

Marjorie has a way of suddenly springing new names upon me in casual conversation—generally Christian names of the masculine gender—and expecting me to know them at once—by instinct, I suppose.

"Captain Twysden, of course. Don't pretend not to know things. You only do it to annoy me."

"Happy Eric," I said. "Is it settled yet? Have you looked out something for a wedding present?"

"His regiment is ordered out to India." Marjorie is accustomed to pursue her own line of thought, paying little attention to the remarks of those who converse with her unless it happens to suit her own purpose. "Molly doesn't want to go. We are trying to get him a home appointment. I'm sure you could help if you tried. You must know a lot of old generals and things at your club."

I saw myself approaching any of these ancient warriors on such a subject. "You forget," I said coldly, "I belong to the other party. My man has a home appointment already. Besides, I don't approve of officers deserting their regiments in the face of—possible discomfort."

Marjorie was looking at the window curtains in an absent-minded way. She has missed many of my good things from this lack of serious attention. "Eric is really rather nice," she said, half to herself, with a reminiscent smile. I may have been wrong in objecting to this habit of following her own course: it adds the charm of self-revelation to the other pleasures of her society.

"I suppose Eric complimented you on your new hat this afternoon," I suggested.

She looked up sharply. "How did you know that?"

"By a process of deduction unknown to feminine logic."

She frowned. "I wish you wouldn't use those horrid words that nobody can understand. You only do it when you mean to be nasty."

VI

The next time that I came across Packe I fancied he did not seem anxious to converse with me. In fact, for several weeks he avoided me at the club. It was not until I met him face to face one day in the magazine room (where there are very few members to be found towards the end of the month) that I learned what he had been doing.

" I've been plugging away for all I'm worth," he said.

" Excellent ! " I said cheerily. " Much the best thing for you."

He looked at me curiously. " I dare say." He hesitated a moment. " I owe you something for the idea."

" Do you ? " For the moment I could not think what he meant.

" I'm doing the novel you suggested that day on the Embankment."

" Good ! How is it going ? "

Again there was a slight hesitation. " Very fairly, I think. I don't know about one thing—perhaps you won't like it."

" Why on earth not ? "

It took a long time to get at his trouble this time, but at last I gathered that he thought Marjorie might imagine—of course without the smallest foundation—that he had put her into the book. " You see," he explained carefully, " I had to get a villain into the piece. Not exactly a villain, of course, but some one to interfere with the course of true love."

" I see. So you took Marjorie." I rubbed my hands, unobserved. This would be rather fun—if she ever saw it.

He became explanatory. " It seemed to come that way," he said. " You know, these things get beyond me, sometimes. It just *had* to go like that. Of course, your wife would never think of interfering as I made her—as I had to make this woman interfere. I think—I hope," he added modestly, " that she does not altogether dislike me."

" Certainly," I said in haste. " I mean, of course not." I had some ado to preserve my gravity.

" Tell me," I went on, after he had babbled about some other points in the book for a few minutes. " What have you made her like—this female villain of yours ? "

He fumbled with words. " Well, you see, I had to—she seemed to come that way——"

" You mean that she is as like Marjorie as you could get her ? "

He stammered. " I suppose—in a sort of way—the outside."

" Nothing derogatory to her personal appearance ? "

He shook his head. " I did try, but it wouldn't come. Didn't seem right, somehow. No ! she came out as pretty as a peach."

I laughed aloud. " Then you may take my word for it, Marjorie won't mind. Go on and prosper, my lad. You need not be under the slightest apprehension on that score."

" You really think so ? "

I answered, with conviction, that I was sure of it.

VII

Packe did not show me the book at that time, though I confess I should rather have liked to see it. But of course I saw it when it began to appear in the *New Weekly*. That eminent literary paper had just decided to run a serial, and Packe's agent, being a smart fellow, had weighed in with a scenario and a few of the early chapters and secured his client a rather useful advertisement. For the *New Weekly* was one of the papers that counted—if there are such things. And Packe had never sold a serial before in his life.

He hadn't even finished the book then. I remember it was one afternoon in July that he came up to me at the club and announced its completion.

"It's done," he said. "I've sent the final chapter in to-day."

I expressed a polite hope that it would be a great success.

"It's far the best thing I've ever done," he said.

This attitude was unusual with Packe. When he has finished a book it generally takes him a month or more to recover his normal spirits. Commonly he considers his latest novel quite unworthy of his powers—until it has been out at least half a year.

"How have you finished it?" I asked.

He gave a little shrug of the shoulders. "Well," he said, as though half ashamed of himself, "she just had to marry the other chap—the soldier man."

I manifested some surprise. "That wasn't the original idea, was it?"

He intimated again that he was not responsible for the action of his characters, after a certain point. The beggars were apt to take the bit between their teeth and go their own way, in spite of him.

"And what happened to you?" I inquired.

"Suicide," he said briefly, with the air of one who did not wish to discuss an unpleasant subject.

"I see. The pathetic touch—sob-stuff."

"My dear fellow," he protested, "it's the most moving thing that's been written for the last twenty years. It would make an alligator weep. I'm serious. The thing is immense."

"Well, that sounds all right."

He still looked a trifle gloomy.

"She won't be able to stand up against that final scene," he said.

"Who? Molly?"

He nodded. There was something almost Olympian about the man at that moment.

"H'm," I mused. "At the same time, the public doesn't care for an unhappy ending."

"If it's a choice between Molly and the public," he said grandly, "the public must take its chance."

I raised my eyebrows by the fraction of an inch. "At the same time," I ventured, "if you get the public you probably get Molly as well. Whereas——"

But he looked so threatening that I did not pursue the subject any further. Packe was always ridiculously touchy. He must have weighed well over thirteen stone, too.

When I got home again that afternoon I discovered the usual two visitors in the drawing-room. Hastily retreating, I nearly fell over Marjorie in my study.

"Eric and Molly are dining with us to-night," she said.

"Good business. When are they going to bring it off?"

She looked up at me suspiciously.

"It's all right," I explained. "I've come over to your point of view. Packe isn't the man for her, after all." To tell the truth, I felt that a little more of this would be more than I could stand. A man wants his study to himself occasionally.

The dear girl jumped up and clung round my neck.

"I knew you'd be sensible—in time," she said. "Now you can help. Molly thinks a lot of your opinion."

"Give me Eric," I said. "I fancy I can handle him to advantage. You can deal with the girl yourself."

I have my doubts whether this was exactly what Marjorie wanted. However, she was so pleased to have me on her side at last that she made no protest. Besides, she had to leave us over a decanter of port. I got it up on purpose to bring the little man up to the scratch. He seemed to me to lack push.

Tactfully, by easy stages, I led him on to discuss the situation. Twysden appeared to be slightly worried. The home appointment did not seem to be coming off. Molly, he was convinced, would never consent to India. Should he send in his papers? What did I advise?

I assumed the fatherly air. After all, I was a sort of cousin of the girl's.

"Forgive my saying so," I replied, "but I should carry her off her feet. She is like that. Once marry her, and she'll go out to India or Africa or anywhere you like. What she suffers from is a chronic inability to make up her mind. That means you have got to do it for her."

I will do Twysden the justice to say that he seemed a reasonable little fellow. He said he desired nothing better, but how was that sort of thing done? He deferred to my greater experience of the world.

"There is a registry office," I said, "not more than three hundred yards away, in Bucklers Road. Go there to-morrow and make inquiries. When you've got everything fixed up, put it to Molly that you propose to marry at once."

"You think she would agree?"

"My dear Twysden," I said—we had finished the bottle—"I am sure of it. It's the thought of all the necessary preparations that puts off a girl of that type. Take my word for it, she'll follow your lead like a lamb."

And on that we joined the ladies. They were going to a theatre afterwards, so I escaped down to the club. I suppose I must have felt unusually cheerful that night, for I remember meeting Packe and telling him what I had said to his rival. It was the first time I had brought up a bottle of port since the autumn of 1914.

VIII

Marjorie and I went away for our summer holiday the next day. We went to Westerfield, and stayed at the Royal Hotel, partly because I knew it very well, and partly because I am an original member of the Royal Westerfield Golf Club. We must have been there about a week when I came back one evening, after a strenuous match, and found Marjorie examining the visitors' book that lay on the hall table.

"Look at this," she said. "Isn't it funny? Can it be the same man, do you think?"

I looked. On the page, with the ink scarcely dry, I beheld Packe's signature, in his unmistakable calligraphy, "Reginald J. Packe, London," sprawled across the page; and beneath, in the same hand, "Mrs Packe."

"It certainly is his writing," I said cautiously.

"Gracious! I wonder who on earth he can have married," said Marjorie.

For my part, I was wondering whether Packe would be glad to see us. It was just conceivable, of course, that he might have come down to that obscure spot just because it was out of the way. It might have been—but no matter! I blush to think that for a moment or two I harboured unworthy suspicions about my old friend.

"I suppose we shall see at dinner," I said, and left it at that.

We did. Molly Bastable preceded Packe into the spacious coffee room of the Royal some five minutes after we had taken our seats. By good fortune Marjorie was watching the other entrance. The shock might otherwise have proved fatal. I leaned across the table to prepare her.

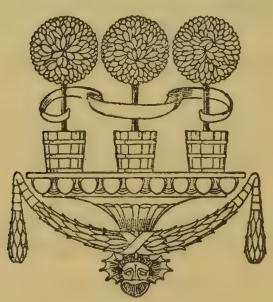
" By the way," I said, " I think I can guess who the new Mrs Packe is. Don't hurry ! She's an old friend."

She caught my eye, saw that I meant something, and turned round quickly. It was a full five minutes before she could pull herself together sufficiently to resume her fish. What she said afterwards to Molly in the lounge I don't know, for I was cross-examining Packe in the smoking-room.

" After you left that night," he said simply, " I saw at once that it was a much better way than mine. I went down the next afternoon and made inquiries. The day after I happened to come across Molly in the street. She stopped and said something nice about the book. I put it to her straight then. I talked : I tell you I fairly swept her away. I went right off and got the licence ; the next day we went to the office. Curious thing is, just as we were leaving, after the show was over, we met that little Lancer fellow. Molly, bless her, never turned a hair, but he looked more than a bit surprised."

" I expect he did," I said. " That fatal habit of procrastination again ! And now, what are you going to do about your novel ? "

He laughed. " I shall alter it when the proof comes in," he said. " I have come round to your opinion—the public much prefers a happy ending."



OVER-POPULATION AND POVERTY

By HAROLD COX

THE most obvious cause of poverty is the attempt to maintain a large family on a small income. Even with people who are fairly well-to-do, the family suffers if children come too quickly. If the family is small, the children and their parents can obtain better food, better sleeping accommodation, and a higher standard of comfort generally. In addition, the children have a better chance of a future career, because their strength has not been impaired by scanty living in childhood. Moreover, the parents have not been tempted to send the child to work too young. It is difficult to see how any one can honestly dispute the proposition that if the poorer classes in this country were to reduce their families to the standard now common in the middle and upper classes, an immense amount of horrible poverty would at once disappear. The relief would be immediate, for each new baby means a fresh burden on the family budget.

There is a further aspect of the problem, which is even more personal, namely, the woman's aspect. It is a horrible waste of a woman's strength to be condemned to produce children who are doomed either to die in infancy or to be weaklings through life because they have been produced too rapidly, or because one or other of the parents had some hereditary disease. No political injustice of which women complain approaches in cruelty this personal injustice to which many married women are compelled to submit. No woman ought to be asked to go through the strain that child-bearing involves unless she and her husband deliberately desire another child, and unless there is a reasonable prospect that the child to be born will be a credit to its parents and a strength to the nation.

At present the function of maternity, which may fairly be described as ultimately the most important of human functions, is left to chance. Men and women gratify a primitive instinct without any regard to the consequences. A striking example of what those consequences may be was given just a year ago by Mr W. A. Appleton in the annual report of the General Federation of Trade Unions. He described the investigations which had been made into the

condition of a number of poor women in Dundee, and mentioned that eleven women had between them given birth to seventy-eight children, of whom forty-nine were dead. One woman had given birth to twelve children, all of whom were dead. Commenting on this terrible picture, Mr Appleton rightly says that these cases " afford discreditable examples of man's sordid disregard of his social and industrial obligations ; of crude and short-sighted selfishness ; and of physiological ignorance and personal negligence which are appalling." No one will venture to say that these words of condemnation are a whit too strong. They are all the more valuable as coming from a prominent trade union leader. There can be no doubt whatever that if the people who are responsible for such records as these, whether through selfishness or through ignorance, could be persuaded to imitate the prudence of the upper classes, and especially of the clergy and the medical profession, many thousands of women would yearly be saved from needless suffering.

Nor is this problem solely personal and domestic : it is also national. If the nation were really in need of more sons and daughters to fight its battles and carry on its industries, it might reasonably ask women not to shrink from the burdens that nature has placed upon them. But at the present time the nation has no need of a rapidly increasing supply either of sons or of daughters. On the contrary, all available evidence shows that our present population is too great for our industrial needs. At the same time it is certain that a mere multiplication of numbers will not add to our military strength in a period when the decision in war will rest, not with big battalions, but with the scientific development of aircraft and poison gas.

Here it is sufficient to deal with the first of these considerations, namely, our industrial requirements. Speaking on this point at a meeting in Cambridge at the end of February, Mr Stanley Baldwin said that we must never forget that this island " has a population too large and over-industrialised." It is satisfactory to find a prominent politician with the courage to recognise this basic fact. The explanation of the fact is fairly simple. Until the development of industrialism that followed the invention of the steam engine the population of England increased very slowly—in some centuries scarcely at all. At the end of the eighteenth century, when steam power was applied to machinery and new and improved machines were introduced to utilise the new motive power, our population suddenly took an upward rush, largely because there was a demand for child labour to work the new machines.

Horrible poverty for a time ensued. Happily, Parliament intervened to prohibit the employment of young children in factories.

Simultaneously, the world's growing consumption of the products of English looms created an increased demand for adult labour. As machine industry was further developed the wealth it created raised the standard of living for the whole community.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a gradual diminution of the birth-rate began, and has now become an important feature of our English problem of population. Some people have been so impressed by this reduction of the birth-rate that they have raised a cry of alarm at the prospect of what they call race suicide. These alarmists have failed to notice that simultaneously with the decline in the birth-rate, the actual number of births has increased ; for the very simple reason that the rate is taken over a larger population. The figures up to the outbreak of the Great War are so striking that it is worth while to quote them.

Between 1880 and 1913 the birth-rate in England and Wales declined from 34·2 per 1000 to 24·1 per 1000 ; in the same period the number of births annually recorded in England and Wales rose from 881,643 to 881,890. Thus, in spite of a fall in the birth-rate of more than 10 per 1000, the actual number of births per annum slightly increased. Simultaneously, another force was operating to increase our population, namely, the general improvement in the standard of health, partly itself due to a lower birth-rate, partly to improved sanitation. The result was that, in spite of the reduced birth-rate, the annual increase in our population became greater than ever before. It is significant to record that in the first ten years of the present century the population of England and Wales increased by a larger number than it had done in the whole of the eighteenth century. In face of such a fact as this it is ridiculous to talk about race suicide.

Nor was the situation substantially changed by the facts of the Great War. In spite of our heavy war losses the population of England and Wales increased by nearly 2,000,000 in the decade 1911-21. It is now increasing at the rate of nearly 6000 a week.

How are these constantly growing numbers to obtain support for themselves ? The essential characteristic of England's industrial position is her dependence on foreign markets. She won her command over the markets of the world in the nineteenth century by her enterprise in utilising machinery and in developing her mercantile marine and her financial organisation. But it is futile to suppose that England can permanently retain a privileged position as the workshop of the world. As a matter of fact, many of the countries that fifty years ago were dependent upon England's industrial enterprise are now themselves among her keenest competitors. There is every probability that this competition will develop. It is

indeed to-day developing rapidly. Even our own Dominions are insisting upon the exclusion of British goods wherever they see a chance of manufacturing for themselves. Mr Baldwin was, therefore, perfectly right in declaring that we are over-populated and over-industrialised. If, then, our population continues to grow, it is certain that large numbers of people will be unable to find regular employment. The burden of their maintenance will have to be borne by the industries that still remain active, and the weight of that burden will in turn weaken the capacity of those industries to compete in the world's markets.

Some hopeful writers have urged that the problem can be dealt with by the encouragement of emigration, but even a cursory glance at the facts shows that emigration cannot possibly afford adequate relief. Our population is growing at the rate of 6000 additional persons every week. To transport even half that number of persons week by week, and establish them as settlers in distant Dominions, is impossible. It could not be done even if the Dominions were ready to receive such an influx of people, and if the money were available to pay for their transport and to finance their settlement. As a matter of fact, however, the Dominions are extremely shy of an uncontrolled influx of settlers. The Australians, in particular, have made it perfectly clear that they will not and cannot accept urban workers. They want people who have been trained on the land and are willing to continue working on the land. But of these we have barely enough for our own needs in England. It is only in the industrial centres that our population is excessive. But it is just this over-industrialised population that the Dominions do not want. It is true that in Canada the opposition to urban immigration is less than in Australia, but even in Canada the desire is mainly for rural workers, and experience has clearly demonstrated that the town-bred citizen cannot, in the large majority of cases, be converted into an efficient rural worker. For these reasons emigration must be absolutely ruled out as a device for dealing with our present problem of over-population.

We come back, then, to the point from which we started: that our numbers are growing too rapidly. So far as the individual family is concerned, this over-rapid growth means misery for the mother, hardship and sickness and a bad upbringing for the children. For the nation it means a vast mass of unemployment, which will tend to grow more serious as other countries become less dependent on our manufactures, while our industrialised population continues to increase. The remedy is plain. The poorest classes in our large towns, who are now multiplying their numbers without regard to present difficulties or future dangers, must learn to limit their

families. The commercial and professional classes, skilled artisans, and many agricultural labourers have already learnt this lesson. By limiting the size of their families they secure a higher standard of life for themselves and a better upbringing for their children. They thus contribute towards raising the standard of life for the whole nation. In the past, England's success in the world has been due, as Bacon pointed out in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the quality, not to the quantity of her people. It is upon that characteristic that we shall have to rely for success in the future struggles we may have to face.

ONLY AN OFFICER

(*24th July* 1919)

By GILBERT FRANKAU

Only an officer ! Only a chap
Who carried on till the final scrap,
Only a fellow who didn't shirk—
Homeless, penniless, out of work,
Asking only a start in life,
A job that will keep himself and his wife,
" And thank the Lord that we haven't a kid."
Thus men pay for the deeds men did !

Only an officer ! Only a chap
Wounded and gassed in a bit of a scrap,
Only a fellow who didn't shirk—
Shaky and maimed and unfit for work,
Asking only enough in life
To keep a home for himself and his wife,
" And she'll work if she can, but, of course, there's the kid."
Thus men pay for the deeds men did !

Only our officers ! Only the chaps
That war-time uses and peace-time scraps,
Only the fellows a bit too proud
To beg a dole from the charity-crowd,
Carrying on in civilian life,
Carrying on—with a smile for the wife,
" But it's breaking his heart because of the kid ! "
Thus men starve for the deeds men did !

MEMORABLE DAYS

By JOHN GALSWORTHY

"WHEN that I was and a tiny little boy—with a hey and a ho and a hey nonny no!" certain days were memorable. These were days when my Father's house was full of preparations for a dinner party, and I would be hard at work during all the hours not given up to lessons. First I had to attend the head gardener in the hothouse and the vinery, selecting the pine-apples and grapes, or from the south wall picking the peaches and nectarines; nor could I on any account be absent when Henry, the butler, with two wicker baskets, and my Father opened the cellar door which kept in that half-nice funny smell, as of gas and mush-rooms. With my hands in my waist-belt and my legs apart, I would stare up at my Father handling the bottles with extreme care, and with his thin, taper-nailed fingers holding them up to the light. And I used to pretend that I was in a dungeon, and be very careful to be in front when we brought the bottles up.

I had also constantly to be in the kitchen, to see exactly what was going to be eaten, and be told: "Now, Master Johnny, don't touch!" I found it advisable, too, to watch the special polishing which George, the groom, would give his buttons, in order that he might take charge of—I forget exactly what.

All this would be in the morning. The afternoon would be even more exciting; for, quite early, my friend, Mr Sawdy, the greengrocer, who had whiskers and such a pale, nice face, and was pleased with my society, and my friend Glover who could wink, would arrive, beautifully dressed, with white gloves in their pockets (because I saw them), to help Henry and François put the extra leaves in the dining-table, and lay it and the sideboard. Every time I came in to see, the room would look more and more snowy and shining, and smell nicer and nicer of melon and pineapple and flowers; till at last I would say to Mr Sawdy: "I might have a wafer now, Mr Sawdy." And Mr Sawdy would look round, and hook one out of the box for me, and shake the box a little so that no one could see there was one gone. And I would eat the wafer—nibbling it ever so slowly from one of its corners upwards—they were lovely wafers, and tasted of something in between.

I was not so interested in the flowers which my Mother would be arranging in the library, and bringing in. I liked the smell indeed, and the colours, but I felt that they were not serious like the melon, or the peaches, or the wafers. Nor was I interested in the drawing-rooms on these days, because there was nothing there that was going to be eaten ; they just looked all shiny and had no one in them. Sometimes all the twenty-four people, except my Father and Mother, would be coming specially—some all the way from London—in their carriages ; but sometimes there would be guests staying in the house, especially my Uncle Wally and my Cousin Evie.

On such occasions I would go and see my Cousin Evie—she was very old, more than twenty—have her hair done by Adèle. It was nice and almost yellow, and was rolled up on a sort of cushion, very high ; I would stand at the corner of her dressing-table and turn over the silver things and read the monograms out loud, and smell the powder, and look at her neck and think what a lot of neck it was.

Presently she would say : " Now, Johnny, trot along ! " And I would go and sit on the stairs, waiting for my Uncle Wally, because I had to see his waistcoat buttons. He had a very large waistcoat, much larger than my Father's, and more white and shiny ; and it took up a lot of room on him because he was not tall, only very broad and square ; but he smelled lovely and had three more rings than my Father, because my Father had none ; and his face was pale and broad, and had twisty little grey moustaches, and a little grey tuft on his chin ; his eyes were pale and blue and round—and they pouted at you ; and his collar was very high and shiny and had sharp points, very wide apart, and his chin fitted beautifully between them ; and when he walked it was like one of our pigeons.

He seemed to me a very distinguished man. He played billiards beautifully. I always had to see his waistcoat buttons, because of their being black and white with diamonds in the middle. He had a funny broad ribbon, too, coming out of his waistcoat pocket, and some shiny things at the end of it, dangling. He used to tap my chest and tell me to puff it out like a man ; but it took me too much time to remember. He used to show me his watch, too ; it was yellower and fatter and smoother than my Father's, but it could not strike.

I liked my Uncle Wally best when he sat on the terrace and drank claret cup, because he let me taste it. I had to watch his lips, too, when they made rings of cigar smoke, all blue. He made better rings than my Father, and his voice was interesting to listen to—it had a sort of fat sound. When I had seen his buttons, I had to go and hear my Father say to my Mother : " Now, Blanche, you'll be late." My Mother would be beautiful with ear-rings and a curl

coming down each side of her neck—they were called ringlets. I always wanted to pull them so as to see them curl up again like my toy snake, only I was not allowed. But I might stand in the doorway so that my Father could not go out without wrestling with me ; this he would do very seriously, puffing a little to show me how strong I was, then suddenly slide me between his legs and leave me on the floor.

Then my Mother would push my hair up and say : " Now, Johnny darling, go along to bed," and I would go by one door and come back by another, before Mademoiselle or Nurse could see me, so as to sit at the top of the stairs and look down into the hall.

I could hear the carriages driving up, and see Henry walking across the hall with a lady and gentleman behind him, and hear him say : " General and Mrs Grim," and then he would stand still at the drawing-room door while they all came up, and blew in his ear, one after the other ; and he would say—like this : " Mr and Lady Evelyn Tushby " ; " Sir Edgar and Lady Dulane, and Miss Dulane—ahem ! " ; " Mr and Mrs Tureen " ; " Mr and Mrs Tipping —ahem ! ahem ! " This lasted a long time, and there was ever such a loud nice noise of talking, which made me feel buzzy and excited. Then Henry shut the door, and it was quiet.

I knew then they had all come, and that was somehow nice. I could see Henry standing all alone down there, and once I saw him put his thumb up to his nose and spread out his fingers and point them at the door. I was very interested. But before I could say, " Henry ! " and ask him why, he opened the dining-room door and went in. He always came out again very quickly, and opened the drawing-room door and said : " Dinner is served."

Then I would stand up and put my head over the banisters, because I had to see everybody properly. It was like the Noah's ark, only the gentlemen were black and shiny white in front, and the ladies had ever so much more skin than Mrs Noah, and were wider below ; and last of all came my Mother and Sir Edgar Dulane, because he was the tallest of all ; and my Uncle Wally was the shortest—only he looked very important, he was so broad, and had the largest waistcoat. And just then Mademoiselle used to say : " Jean, comme tu es méchant ; viens donc ! " and that was all, because I never heard and never saw any more.

A YARN

By ADMIRAL MARK KERR, C.B.

THIS little yarn of mine is really a true story about the late Admiral Sir William Hewett, V.C., K.C.B., to whom I was Flag-Lieutenant for eighteen months. He was Commodore on the West Coast of Africa, and shortly after his arrival on the station he received orders to proceed up the river and bombard the capital town of King Ja-Ja.

This was intended as a punishment for the sudden and violent death of a British missionary in the kingdom over which Ja-Ja reigned. There was nothing that Billy Hewett enjoyed more than a scrap, and he was delighted to find himself let in for one on his first arrival on the station. Accordingly, in great good humour, he started on his way to the scene of action. He was a sturdy man with a genius for fighting, a fearlessness that had won him the Victoria Cross twice, and a temper as quick as his brain. He spoke generally in short, jerky sentences, and he flared up into a blaze of passion at a moment's notice, but the fire was soon over, and was usually followed by a pleasant calm.

Suddenly the Officer of the Watch approached the Commodore and told him that a canoe, pulled by two men, and with a strangely dressed native in the stern, was ahead of them and waving, in the endeavour to stop the ship.

Hewett ordered the " Active's " engines to be stopped, the canoe was allowed alongside, and on board stepped a pleasant-looking darkie dressed in a pair of flannel breeches, a consular coat, a white straw hat, and a pleasant smile. On being asked his business, he merely answered : " I want to see Commodore." On this being reported to that Officer, he gave directions for the coloured gentleman to be shown up on to the bridge.

On arrival there the stranger inquired : " You Commodore ? " and Hewett acknowledged the fact, and was astounded at the next remark of his *vis-à-vis*. " I Ja-Ja. Why you come bombard me ? " For the moment Hewett couldn't remember the reason of his war-like expedition, and while he was trying to recollect it Ja-Ja again broke in : " I tell you what, Commodore, it only one of them damn missionaries. You come dine with me to-night, and we'll talk it over. I hang somebody for you, and we make it all right. The

missionary make too much trouble, wiv the Bible in one hand and selley goods in the other. You come dine with me, Commodore?"

There was something so frank and engaging about the dusky monarch and his smile that Hewett promised to dine and negotiate before opening fire, and accordingly that evening he went ashore in his galley to fulfil his engagement.

The dinner was fairly good, but the champagne was infamous. It was known as trade champagne, but what it was made of no one ever knew, and the head that it gave you no one would ever forget. However, a certain quantity was drunk, and as whist had not yet reached the coast, tossing for half-sovereigns was the amusement of the King and the Commodore after dinner, at which the latter succeeded in winning five pounds. Negotiations were entered into on the subject of the defunct missionary, and instead of Ja-Ja's town being bombarded and a quantity of innocent people being killed, honour was satisfied by the promise of Ja-Ja to carry out the Old Testament policy of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

The "Active" did not come back to Ja-Ja's town for six months after the above negotiations, but when she next steamed up the river, Ja-Ja, resplendent in some old uniform which the Commodore had given him, arrived on board in his largest canoe and invited his old friend to dinner again. He was horrified to hear the Commodore's reply: "Dine with you! No, I'm damned if I will. I haven't got over the bad head that I got from that horrible stuff you gave me to drink six months ago, and I am not going to do it again." Poor Ja-Ja was almost tearful as he replied: "I know that damn filth, Commodore, but I sent to Englandside for Perrier Jouet forty-eight, specially for you. Swop me gob; you come and dine with me, Commodore?" The whimsical smile, the limpid eye, and the pleading voice with a quiver in it almost suggestive of tears, entirely melted the kind-hearted sailor, and he consented to dine once more and sample the new brand of champagne. When he returned on board he was well pleased with himself, and still more so the next morning to find he rose up as bright as a button. He told me that he was very touched at finding out that Ja-Ja had sent, to England, orders to buy the best and most expensive champagne that was to be had in the market so that he could entertain his friend properly on his next visit. The Commodore's happiness was added to by the fact that they had again tossed for half-sovereigns, and the King had again lost five pounds.

It is sad to relate that after a succession of Commodores and Admirals who all loved Ja-Ja, there eventually arrived an Admiral on the station who possessed neither a sense of humour nor an

understanding of the native population. He quarrelled with Ja-Ja so severely that eventually he recommended him for deportation. Unfortunately, the home authorities backed him up, and Ja-Ja was ordered to be sent to end his days in Nassau Island of the West Indies, and in his exile he was only to be accompanied by five wives. This was a bitter blow to our old friend, and he felt that insult was being added to injury. Incontinent, he sat down and wrote the following letter to the Great White Queen :—

" Dear Sister Queen Victoria,

" You have ordered me to be sent away from my country. Perhaps you are right, but we will not go into that. But you have ordered that I should have only five wives to go with me. I do not think it dignified for a King to have only five wives. I beg you to let me have at least twelve. You would not like to have only five husbands.—I am, yours respectfully, Ja-Ja."

The Queen was so delighted with this letter, which tickled her sense of humour, that she at once gave orders that Ja-Ja was to be allowed to take twelve wives with him into exile.

FINDING MR WING

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

WHEN the nurse returned, Mr Wing was not in bed. The bedclothes were thrown carelessly back, the closet door stood open and Mr Wing's grey suit, which had been hanging in the closet, was no longer there. His tan shoes were also gone, and there was but one thing for the nurse to believe: Mr Wing, during her absence from the room, had dressed himself and escaped.

The nurse's first thought was that she would be blamed for carelessness, but her second thought was that no one, not even Doctor Collinge, had told her to remain constantly in the room. No one had told her that Mr Wing needed any watching whatever. Feeling much better, she went to notify Mrs Wing and see what was to be done.

"He must be found, of course," said Mrs Wing instantly. She put down her sewing and walked straight to the telephone and got Doctor Collinge on the wire.

The thing to do, the doctor was sure, was to notify the police. The police, it seemed, had a bureau for this very purpose—a bureau of missing persons—and Doctor Collinge would attend to everything. Of course if Mrs Wing cared to meet him at the police-station, he would be glad.

The lieutenant in charge heard the story of Mr Wing's flight and studied the photograph Mrs Wing had thought to bring with her. Grey suit, tan shoes, height about five feet six inches, weight two hundred and six, complexion white but apt to be very red when he walked or exercised—and so on. Hair? Quite bald. It would be all right; they ought to pick him up in an hour or two, now that every station had a radio. Unless——

Mr Wing's melancholy was a bad sign, the lieutenant admitted. He hoped Mr Wing had not headed for the pier. Or the subway—a lot of these cases jumped in front of subway trains nowadays. But he might be home and in bed already; these sick-nerve fellows took queer notions. He might go home of his own accord. Lots of them did, after testing their ability to escape from the nurse. They did not know where to go or what to do.

" Had I better engage a detective ? " Mrs Wing asked anxiously.

" That's up to you, lady," the lieutenant answered. " We'll do all we can, you can count on that."

II

The detective, when he came to the house, said his name was Bunce and seemed proud of it. He had very large hands and feet and a frown that deepened when he thought, as if thinking were the hardest part of his work, and his closely clipped hair made Mrs Wing think of her butcher. Mr Bunce was evidently a very ordinary man ; he seemed to be a very ordinary detective. He jotted all the details in a small end-fold memorandum-book, frowning and using a short stub of pencil. He stared at the page of the memorandum-book as if it were hypnotising him or putting him to sleep or giving him intense pain.

"Jus' one thing more, lady," he said. "Did the gent have anything special on his mind ? Was he worrying about anything special ? "

" Yes, he was," said Mrs Wing. " He began worrying about it the day after he had this nervous breakdown. I never heard him mention it before that. And it was an odd thing for him to worry about, because he has never been what you would call a religious man. And he did not tell me about it : he told Doctor Collinge."

" I told Mr Wing, you understand," said Doctor Collinge, " that unless I knew what was worrying him, it would be difficult for me to put him in shape again. So he told me. Basically, his trouble was due to overwork—this New York habit of overdriving the human machine. He overloaded his nervous system—asked it to carry him too far. That led to irritability, of course, and the irritability brought about the quarrel with his wife."

" Had a fuss, did they ? " asked Mr Bunce.

" Now, not at all what you think," said Doctor Collinge. " It was not a vulgar ' family row.' Nothing Mrs Wing had done led up to it. The man's nerves were jangled. He had become morose. Everything irritated him. He simply blew up. When I reached the house, he was to all appearances a raving maniac. He had thrown chairs at the walls, broken all the pictures, driven his wife out of the rooms, and was running up and down yelling and shouting incoherently. It all burst forth in an instant."

" All I said to him," said Mrs Wing, " was, ' The Brownlees have asked us to dinner next Thursday,' and he——"

" A brainstorm," said Doctor Collinge, for Mrs Wing was unable to continue. " Anything might have set him off, and Mrs Wing has nothing with which to blame herself. She has been the best of

wives—the very best of wives. And Mr Wing has been the very best of husbands."

"Oh, the very best!" said Mrs Wing. "We were always so happy!"

"I got him quieted," said Doctor Collinge, "and I got him to bed. I talked to him and tried to get at the bottom of his trouble. He said it was not his business: his business was all right. He said it was not his family: his family was all right. Everything was all right, he insisted, but he lay in bed there and wept—wept like a child! And would not be comforted. He said his whole life had been wasted and he would die and everything would be worse than worthless because——"

"Well, what?" asked Mr Bunce, wetting his stub of pencil.

"I'm trying to think how he put it," said Doctor Collinge. "He is worried because he does not know what he can talk to God about."

"Because what?" asked Mr Bunce, taking his pencil from his mouth and staring at Doctor Collinge.

"Because he doesn't know what he can talk to God about," the doctor repeated. "He says that he is sure to die some day——"

"That's fair," said Mr Bunce approvingly. "That's fair enough. He'll do that all right!"

"And he will have to meet God face to face, then," continued Doctor Collinge, "and he is worried because he won't know what to say or how to say it."

"What did you tell him?" asked Mr Bunce.

"Naturally," Doctor Collinge said, "I advised him to put the thought out of his mind and try to rest quietly——"

"Well, you are a mutt, ain't you?" said Mr Bunce, as if that had been his opinion of Doctor Collinge from the first. And he turned to Mrs Wing. "Don't you worry about your husband, ma'am," he said. "He ain't gone nuts, and he ain't jumping in no river, neither. Now, with me business is business, and if you say you want me to find the gent, it's my job to find him; but if you've got the nerve to wait, you don't need nobody to find him. 'Leave him alone and he'll come home, fetchin' his tail behind him,' like the poem says. I'll go find him if you say so, but it's like I tell you. I don't guess it—I know it!"

"I strongly advise that Mr Wing be found before he does himself harm," said Doctor Collinge. "He is in no condition to be wandering at large."

"It's up to you, ma'am," said Mr Bunce, making an outward gesture with his big, muscled hands as if casting away the responsibility of a decision. "I'm a pretty good finder; I guess I can find him if anybody can."

"Find him, please!" said Mrs Wing.

III

Mr Wing on leaving his home had stood for a moment in his door, looking up and down the street to make sure no interfering friend was in sight. He then stepped to the edge of the walk and hailed a passing taxicab.

" There's a ferry," he said to the chauffeur. " I want to go to it. My head is not very clear, you see, but I know it is a ferry. It crosses a river—a big river. Do you know the names of the rivers ? "

" Hudson ? East River ? " suggested the chauffeur.

" I can't remember," said Mr Wing. " There's a railway across the river—a railway that goes to the mountains. That's where I want to go. I want to go to the mountains—to the top of the mountains. I want to go high up on the mountains—God's mountains. This "— and he waved his hand at the buildings across the street — " is man's town. I want to go to the top of God's mountains."

" I guess you want the Weehawken ferry, boss," said the chauffeur. " Hop in, anyhow. You'll know it when you see it, I guess."

The cab went south and then west. It stopped at the ferry and Mr Wing got out and felt in his pocket for the fare. He had quite a fistful of money and he looked at the taxi meter and handed the man a dollar bill.

" I wonder if *you* could tell me ? " he said wistfully. " One of these days you'll be dead, you know, and you'll meet God face to face—just as you are face to face with me now. Now, what are *you* going to say to God when you meet Him face to face ? "

" I'll bite," said the taxicab man, grinning. " What will I say ? "

" Don't you know what you will say ? " asked Mr Wing with real disappointment.

" You can search me ! " said the chauffeur. " Never gave it a thought, boss. And sorry, but the cops won't let me park here. Hey, porter ! Show this guy where he's goin'. He wants mountains."

Mr Wing stood looking after the cab, but the coloured porter touched him on the arm.

" Catskill train, sah ? " he asked. " You ain't got none too much time if you got to buy a ticket. Right this way. Ain't got no grips ? What place are you going at ? "

" What places are there ? " asked Mr Wing.

" Well, sah, you might say the mountains starts at Phœnicia——"

" Yes, yes ! " said Mr Wing. " Phœnicia. That will do. Just as you think best."

" You want a round trip ? Comin' back or goin' to stay ? "

" It's immaterial," said Mr Wing. " I'm sure I don't know.

You see, I want to know what to say to God. I want to go to the mountains and know what to say to God."

"Uh-huh. I guess you better git a one-way ticket," said the porter. "You can buy one back if you wants to come back, and if you don't want to come back, you won't have no return ticket on your mind."

"That's it!" exclaimed Mr Wing gratefully. "I don't want it on my mind. I've had too much on my mind. I think that's the trouble, don't you? If I hadn't had so much on my mind——"

"One way to Phœnicia," the porter said to the ticket-seller, and he had Mr Wing past the turnstile and on the departing ferry. "Thank you, sah! Hope you finds out what you wants to find out."

"Oh, one minute!" cried Mr Wing. "Perhaps you know what a man ought to say to God——"

"Sorry, boss! Ain't got a minute 'fore the boat goes——"

Mr Wing sighed. He looked into the faces about him, but he saw no face that promised to solve his difficulty. One of the boot-blacks did look as if he would know what to say to any one—God included—but he looked as if it would be something impertinent and not at all appropriate, and the other faces offered no hope. Two men were talking real estate with intense interest, trying to plan how to get money for it, and Mr Wing was quite sure God would not be interested in that. Nearly all the faces seemed to be masks that were trying to plan how to *get* something, and it was of nothing of that sort that Mr Wing felt he would be able to speak to God. Mr Wing walked through the ferry as it crossed the river. He stopped before a worried woman with three children and before a bearded man with an automobile tyre and before a young man and young woman who seemed to be in love and asked his question, but none seemed to consider it seriously. They seemed to think he was some variety of wandering evangelist, such as paints "Prepare to Meet Thy God" on wayside rocks. He might be sincere, but he and his question were not important.

And to Mr Wing his question was vitally important; it was the only matter of any importance whatever in the whole wide world; it was the only thing that mattered at all. Evidently, Mr Wing decided, he was to have no help from people. This was a thing he must think out for himself, and to think it out he must get out where there were no men and no houses—nothing between himself and God but a thin veil of sky, and the thinner the better. On the high mountains he could think this thing through; on the high mountains he could draw a deep breath and decide what God was, and when he had decided that he could decide what to say to Him when he met Him face to face.

IV

When Mr Wing reached the Weehawken side of the river, he hurried into a car of his train and seated himself and closed his eyes and tried to think of nothing. He knew it was utterly useless to try to decide this important affair until after he was in the high mountains, and he tried to close his mind, but he found that to be impossible. Whether his eyes were closed or open his mind continued to think, so he set himself rather grimly to do the best he could while sitting in a stuffy car on a stuffy red-plush car-seat. I trust it is not sacrilegious to say that when Mr Wing tried to think of God he thought of his wife and of the few times he had stayed out rather late and come home just a little tottery. On those occasions Mr Wing had worried considerably over what to say to his wife. His wife had let him go to the banquets—if they were banquets—and had expected him to be a good boy and enjoy the affairs in a wise and rational manner and come home sane and sweet and sober and tell her about it as man to wife. Instead he had been a bad boy, and had forgotten his wife entirely, and had done those things he should not have done, and it had been extremely difficult to know what to say to an entirely sober and calm-eyed wife in case she had waited up to converse with him. It had been a great relief when he found her in bed and so deeply steeped in sleep that she could ask nothing. But God would not be asleep. God was always wide awake, and God would look at Mr Wing with eyes that would look quite into his depths.

At Kingston Mr Wing had to change cars and he had time for a bite. The moment he stepped from the car he felt like a new man, although the station was ferociously hot—hotter than the city he had left. But Mr Wing did not notice the heat ; he felt free. He felt so free that he was surprised.

" Why," he thought with amazement, " it's because I am never going back ! It is odd I did not think of that, but it is true. I'll never go back—I'm free—I'm out from under something. I do believe I'll be able to think what to say to God — up in the mountains."

He ate a sandwich and drank a cup of coffee and, when he had bought two large red apples and had slipped them into his pockets, he almost rubbed his hands in glee. He saw now that his wife and his family and his business and people had in general been like a beautifully cemented pile of granite rocks under which he had been suffocated so that he could not get a full breath to think with. He felt as if he could leap from the hot platform and soar into the air. Now he could think, now he had nothing to do but think, and the

rest would be easy. There was no hurry now; he could take his time and consider the matter calmly. He clambered on to his train and the train hurried Mr Wing on and up into the beautiful mountains. But Mr Wing did not feel hurried.

"No," Mr Wing said to himself, "I am never going back. It is not necessary and it would be extremely foolish. There is plenty of money for my wife and plenty for my children. I'll climb the high mountains and know what to say to God."

V

At Phœnicia Mr Wing left his train. There were carryalls and buses and passenger-cars and noise and laughter. The drivers called out, "Taxi, mister? Hotel? Boarding-house?" but Mr Wing shook his head and walked away from them and up the road. There were two main roads, he discovered, but it mattered not at all which he took. He strolled slowly, stopping to look in the shop-windows, his hands clasped behind his back, and where the admirable State road divided he took the branch that led to the left and strolled on and out of the village.

The automobiles were surprisingly numerous and Mr Wing walked at the side of the road. He met young men and women and older men and women, and men carrying rods and creels. He stopped and turned his head to let his eyes follow a young woman in knickers who seemed, for some reason he could not catch, the most unskirted woman he had ever seen, although there were dozens of knickered females here and there. He passed oily men investigating the mysteries hidden under the hoods of automobiles at the side of the road, and he stood for half an hour enjoying the sight of a sow with six piglets in a steeply slanted pig-yard. He met flowers and mountain vistas and, always, the chatter and the laughter of the stream that was near by. He walked a distance briskly with his chin in the air and drew deep breaths.

"Nothing the matter with me!" he told himself happily. "I'm well! I'm sound as a nut!"

He beat himself on the chest and ran a hundred yards and swung his arms and leaped in the air.

"Sound as a dollar!" he declared. "A sound mind in a sound body! That's one thing I won't have to say: I won't have to say, 'Forgive me, I have treated the body You gave me most scandalously.' No, sir! But—but what *will* I say?"

Mr Wing's feeling of happiness fled instantly. He was suddenly conscious that his feet hurt. His toes felt cramped in his shoes just as his soul had felt cramped in his world. He seated himself by the

side of the road and removed his shoes and socks. He remembered his apples and took one from his pocket.

"Now, let's look at this thing simply and sanely," he said, pointing the blade of his knife at the cheek of the apple. "On a certain day my time will come; I'll go away from here and be where God is. Call it heaven, let's say. Possibly St Peter will open the gate, but that's immaterial—somebody will open it. And I'll be inside. For ever. That's plain enough. Wall—gate—St Peter—Henry Wing—heaven."

Mr Wing cut a slice from his apple and ate it slowly and with great relish. He saw heaven with all its multitudes of souls and its many streets and glorious structures and verdant fields and sweet flowers. A delightful place and every one immensely happy, some resting and some hurrying joyfully here and there in pure white robes—not at all like cheap cheese-cloth—with golden borders. But in the midst of all this happiness Mr Wing was nervous; he knew that the first duty, and an unavoidable one, was to appear before God, face to face, and be left alone with God. Mr Wing saw a fine large angel conducting him through the streets—all so perfect and clean and unfussy—and he felt awkward and ashamed. His good deeds seemed to be his suit of clothes, and they fitted him as a nine-year-old boy's suit would fit him: his arms and legs stuck out and not a button buttoned. His life-work seemed to be the moth-eaten carpet-bag he was carrying, and it held nothing but corn-cobs. He felt like an ass—no less.

"Come this way," the angel said.

VI

Mr Wing saw himself enter a vast, limitless place all ablaze with white glory, and the angel left him. Mr Wing was alone with God. Instantly only the worth-while things were worth while. The world and money and whether people had enough to eat or not and the sun and the universe itself became silly trash. They were as unimportant as one fleck of dust in the Sahara Desert—God had made them with equal ease and they were of no more value to Him. One thing only was of value to God, as far as Mr Wing was concerned, and that was what Mr Wing would say. For that would be the great test. If Mr Wing had anything worth saying, he would be permitted to continue to exist; if not, God would look away and Mr Wing would become nothing—utter and absolute nothing.

For the thought that had come to Mr Wing was that men amounted to nothing as mere men. Men were made by the billion, but unless a man found something to say to God, he hadn't amounted

to anything and would be puffed away into nothingness as a useless fleck of dust is puffed away. Otherwise what use were men? Clearly, thought Mr Wing, God made billions and trillions of men with the hope that out of them all a few might have something to say that would be worth while hearing.

"That's it!" said Mr Wing, with irritation. "What am I going to say? I could not say anything that would interest the President of the United States even! But I've got to think it out!"

Mr Wing arose and slung his shoes over his shoulder and continued up the road toward the higher mountains. The grass at the side of the road felt grateful to his bare feet, but he was acutely conscious that his whole past life had been shamefully wasted. He had done the things most men do and had done them better than the average, but to God they would be about as important as the activity of a worm eating a leaf. That fed the worm, but it was nothing to talk to God about.

VII

Before he reached Shandaken Mr Wing's bare feet were very sore. A stone bruise had hurt one of his heels, which made him limp, and the bones of both feet ached. A flitting thought that a man who starts out to discover what to say to God should have comfortable shoes and socks crossed Mr Wing's mind, but the thought only annoyed him and he was frowning when a mud-spattered small automobile came to a jangling stop beside him. A lank man in the driver's seat threw open the fore door.

"Goin 'up Pine Hill way, stranger?" the man asked. "Hop in."

Mr Wing clambered into the car and sighed as he settled down in the seat. The stranger reached across Mr Wing and banged the door violently.

"You got to bang it hard if you want it to stay snut," he said, which would have been a remark of more originality if it had not been said by some million others that same day.

"But you could not say that to God!" said Mr Wing.

The stranger said nothing. His face was narrow and weather-beaten and his nose was large and thin. There was no hair on his face, but his eyebrows were huge brushes of stiff bristles and tufts of similar hair showed in his ear orifices and his nostrils. His hair was a dusty mat and on it he wore a felt hat that had lost all shape. His trousers were faded khaki and on his feet he wore heavy brogans of crudely cured leather that were colourless with soil and dust. His leather belt fastened with a harness buckle and his only other garment seemed to be his shirt, which had its sleeves cut away at

the shoulders and was open at the neck, displaying a chest covered with black hair.

In the car at Mr Wing's feet was an elbow-shaped piece of iron, painted bright red. It seemed evident that the man had left some field hurriedly and that he was a mountain farmer who had broken some farm machine and had gone to get a repair part and that he was now hastening home with it.

" Why not ? " he asked Mr Wing, when they had won through the crowded thoroughfare of Fleishmann's.

The farmer drove in a way that did not permit him to talk while navigating a village street. He sat straight in his seat with both hands on the wheel and glared hard ahead. He held the wheel in a death-grip and constantly jerked it one way or the other. He drove more and harder in a mile than most chauffeurs drive in a thousand miles. It almost seemed as if he had to jiggle the wheel to keep the car going.

" It would be too trivial," said Mr Wing.

" Well, of course, I don't expect to take this flivver with me when I go to heaven," said the stranger, after a glance at Mr Wing's face. " If I had to, I don't know but I'd not want to go there. This flivver is all right to hop into when I've got an errand to do, but I aim to leave it on earth, if there's anything left of it. And if I did take it to heaven, I'd look for the door to be all in good shape when it got there. It wouldn't have to be slammed, because it wouldn't be this kind of a door. And it wouldn't be this kind of a flivver : it would be a golden chariot most likely. You selling cars ? "

" No," said Mr Wing.

" You a preacher ? "

" No."

" Life insurance ? "

" No. Why ? "

" Sort of queer thing you said," began the stranger, but they had come to the village of Pine Hill, and for a few minutes he was too busy driving the car to be able to talk. They stopped at a garage for gas and then made for the tremendous hill.

" When I drive this car through a village, I don't dast talk much," the stranger said. " I don't dast even think much."

" It's like life," said Mr Wing. " We're so busy we don't dare take time to think about or talk about the things we'd like to."

" Shouldn't wonder," said the stranger, who was driving the car at the hill with all his energy. " Maybe Lizzie will make this hill and maybe she won't. Sometimes she does and sometimes she don't. If I say ' Out,' you hop out and walk This is a mighty mean hill."

It was indeed. Half-way up the hill the stranger said " Out ! " and Mr Wing jumped out, but two-thirds of the way up the hill he overtook the car. It was at the side of the road and the radiator was steaming. The stranger had removed the radiator-cap and was sitting on the running-board.

" She's het up," he explained. " Got to let her cool off. You on a walking trip ? "

" I'm going up into the high mountains," said Mr Wing, " to discover what to say to God when I meet Him face to face."

" Well, I don't know any better place to go for it," said the stranger. " There's a couple of mountains nigh the Grand Hotel that ought to be middling fair to do it on. Trouble is, these mountains has got so blame many trees on them. You want to be where there's a good outlook and plenty o' sky. I've always had a notion that if I could take some time off and get down to New York and get up on top of one of them high buildings, I could think right through to what I want to get at. Up here a feller seems to think off into space, somehow, and not get anywheres at it."

" Have you thought of it, too ? " asked Mr Wing with eagerness.

" Oh, sure ! " said the stranger. " A man can't help it, can he ? He's got to think of it once in a while."

" But, I mean, of what you'll say to God when you meet Him face to face ? " urged Mr Wing. " Is that what you think of ? "

" Well, about that," said the stranger. " Same thing : what was I made for and whether I'm doing it."

" That's it," agreed Mr Wing eagerly. " If you are doing it, and know you are, you won't have to say anything to God, will you ? He'll know. How have you made out so far ? "

" Well, I ain't made out very good," admitted the stranger. " I'm kind of at loose ends about it. I can sort of think down into a loose end, but I can't tie the loose ends together, somehow."

He looked at the top of the radiator. At the same time a large black car shot by, climbing Pine Hill in high, and Mr Bunce, who sat in the front seat, turned to say something to the chauffeur. For this reason he did not see Mr Wing, and the big car sped on and over the brow of Pine Hill.

" I'll tell you what I'd do if I was you," said Mr Wing's stranger as he turned from screwing on the radiator-cap. " I'll take you to the lane that leads up to Job Hargin's place and you can go up and put up with Hargin. I'd drive up, but the lane would shake this flivver to pieces. Job will put you up for one night or twenty years, and Mis' Hargin is a mighty good cook, too. Soak you eighteen a week. And if you take the path past Job's barn and on up through his cow lot, you'll come out on top of as good a mountain as you'd

ever want to be on to study out what to say to God. You get a far view and you get a high view."

He started the car and they moved slowly up the hill.

"And if you find out anything," he said, "I wisht you'd let me know. Moult Peters, Arkville Post Office."

VIII

For two weeks Mr Wing ate and slept and climbed up the mountain, and each day he felt stronger and happier. The path ended in an old clearing that was carpeted with ferns and sun-drenched—hay-ferns they were, of course—and he lay among the ferns and gazed at the sky or down the long valley at the misty mountains or across at the green and nearer mountain.

By the end of the first week he was sitting long over his breakfast, stretching his legs comfortably under the table, standing on the porch in the sun, until climbing the mountain seemed more attractive than standing idle in the sun. Then, taking his hickory stick from its place in the porch corner, he would stroll up the mountain, stooping to pick a flower, stopping to pick a mouthful of berries, leaning against a boulder to listen to a chattering squirrel. On the mountain-top he would throw himself down in the ferns and clasp his hands behind his head and look at the sky. When he was tired of one position, he rolled over indolently into another. Crows flapped from mountain to mountain, cawing, and hawks hung in the high air. Then Mr Wing buried his face in his arms and slept. Often he was awakened by something tickling his cheek—an insect or a fern frond. It was good to be alive.

Every evening when he returned to the farmhouse Job Hargin was in the barn milking the cows and Mrs Hargin came to the kitchen door.

"Well, Mr Wing," she would ask, "have you found out what to say to God yet?"

"Not yet," he would reply contentedly. "I haven't really got at it yet. Somehow it's too good just being alive without bothering about anything else. I'll get at it one of these days."

"Well, I don't know as there's any hurry," Mrs Hargin would say. "It'll come to you, I dare say. Anyway, you couldn't have nicer weather for it."

IX

On the Tuesday morning of his third week at Job Hargin's Mr Wing was stretched out on his ferns looking at the far mountains and thinking of nothing at all when he heard voices and sat suddenly

erect. Just emerging from the fringe of sumac and alder at the edge of his clearing were two men—the stranger of the flivver and a man Mr Wing had never seen before. As they saw him the flivver man raised a hand in salutation and Mr Wing arose. The other man took off his hat, but it was to permit him to swab his forehead with a blue-bordered handkerchief. The climb had been hard for Mr Bunce. He stood breathing deep for a full minute before he spoke.

" Well, here you are, are you ? " he said then. " I'll say I had one dickens of a hunt for you. My name's Bunce. I'm a detective. Your wife wanted I should find you. She wants you to come home."

" I was tellin' him," said the stranger, " that you didn't have to go unless you wanted to. You ain't broke no laws."

" That's right, far as it goes," said Mr Bunce. " I can't make you go home."

" I was tellin' him," Moult Peters said, " that you'd likely go home anyway when you found out what you come up here for. How've you been making out at it ? "

Mr Wing seated himself among his ferns again.

" To tell the truth," he said, " I haven't got at it yet. I've been too busy getting acquainted with the world—with the world and myself. Just living—living along from day to day."

He patted the ferns at his side.

" Sit down, won't you ? " he said, but he said it to Moult Peters only. To Mr Bunce he said : " No, I'm not going back yet. I'll go back myself soon. I want to see my wife and my children and I want to get back on my job, and I'm getting eager to get at things again down there, but I came up here for a purpose and I'm not going back until I settle what I came to settle. The trouble is, with me," he said to Moult Peters, " that when I'm not rushed to death with business and overdoing my work and pounding along too hard at things, I enjoy life so much that I'm satisfied to just enjoy life and let it go at that. It's mighty fine just to be alive. It's good just to be alive."

" Well, why wouldn't that do to say ? " asked Moult Peters, picking a fern frond and nibbling the end of it. " What's the use of thinkin' up a lot of fancy talk ? Why can't a man just say to God, ' God, I'm much obliged to You. It was good to be alive ' ? "

Mr Wing looked down the long valley and smiled. Mr Bunce opened his watch and looked at the time and snapped the case shut meaningly.

" Are you glad you are alive ? " Mr Wing asked suddenly, turning to Mr Bunce.

" You bet I am ! " said Mr Bunce heartily. " It's a great game, if you don't overdo it."

" If you don't bite off more than you can chew, and I don't know that anybody asks you to do that," said Moult Peters.

Mr Wing drew a deep breath and beat on his chest three times with his open hands. He arose and looked across the valley and down the long valley and up at the sky.

" All right," he said. " Let's be going down. I'm ready to go home."

" I left my car at the end of the lane," Mr Bunce said, when Mr Wing had settled his bill with Mrs Hargin. " And honest, I've chased all over these mountains lookin' for you. I've had a dickens of a time finding you ! "

" I've had a dickens of a time finding myself," said Mr Wing.

SUNDAY EVENING

From the picture by C. R. W. Nevinson, exhibited at the Leicester Galleries

NURSERY FREE-VERSES

(Done in humble imitation of modern methods, to replace "Nursery Rhymes")

By ANTHONY C. DEANE

I

OLD AND FETTERED FORM

Pussy-cat Mew jumped over a coal,
In her best petticoat burnt a great hole ;
Pussy-cat Mew shan't have any milk
Till her best petticoat's mended with silk.

II

NEW AND FREE-VERSION

pussy-cat Mew and the glowing ember—
o fateful proximity !
leaping, leaping,
leaping,
she wrought damnable damage
to her under-garment.

antic cat-corybant,
for you the inane, the ungalacteal bowl !
plead she patiently,
petulant-passionately,
for milk, o milk, o milk—
until a suitable and silken patch
has closed the chasm, mended
(life's ironic parable !)
the article of clothing scheduled in my previous stanza—
pussy-cat Mew shall have
not
one
single
drop.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE NETHERLANDS*

By MARJORIE BOWEN

THE blonde light that flows into every cranny of every object in a Dutch landscape is, to the foreigner, like an enchantment over this country made by human hands. Even on a wet, stormy day there is this luminous quality that penetrates the clouds, which, swift and loose, fly across the flats from sea to sea, and seems even to glimmer behind the cold stinging ocean mists. This pale, fair sunlight gives the most enchanting effects of aureol perspective; towards evening the long shadows, the faintly traced churches, avenues, and farms give to the distance an effect of slight melancholy, the horizon seems to be infinitely far away, and in the foreground every detail is edged with light and lined with purple and blue shadow, every cluster of reeds, every wayside plant, every barge resting by the bank of a canal, every spare fluttering poplar or wych elm thus gains a distinct place and value in the eye of the spectator—it is like a choice painting where each object is carefully selected and lovingly treated. This is owing to the entirely uninterrupted light, not obscured by mountains nor cupped in valleys, but radiating steadily from the first sparkle in the East to the last glow in the West, and to the long, uncrowded spaces, where the least incident of tree, bridge, or building becomes of importance.

This clear economy of effect and line is grateful to the eye of the traveller used to the rich confusions of more opulent landscapes, for it is not arid, nor neglected, nor desolate. From the flower-studded woods and lark-haunted meadows of Zeeland to the purple moors of Drenthe and the glittering meers of Friesland, the whole country is eloquent of an austere grace, an ordered prosperity, and a patrician comfort.

The foreigner is familiar with this lovely light in the pictures of Cuyp and Potter; these, viewed under alien skies, seem to have been depicted with their tender colours:

"The light that never was on land or sea."

But in the Netherlands one finds this light and even the very

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viewpoint of the artist ; you could almost find where such a one sat for such and such a picture, so faithful to their subjects were these old Dutch masters. Some of Van Goyen's pictures rank in the memory with things actually seen, so vividly exact are they, so charged with loving understanding.

The Netherlands have by no means escaped the devastation of modern commercialism. Much that was beautiful and gracious has been replaced by what is ugly and useful ; too many canals have been filled in, too many plate-glass shop windows inserted in old houses ; industry and prosperity has made the big ports like any other big ports ; motor boats begin to replace the barges, motor cars the high, delicious, hooded carts of North Holland and the bright coloured wagons of Zeeland, but there is yet much that is unchanged. Gerard Douw or Jan Steen might still find unspoilt material to their hand ; here are yet the flat fields, always so fresh and vivid in colour, the houses with the flagged brick passages, the façades with the step gables, and the small Dutch bricks adorned with plaster mouldings, the azure silver canals with the willow and alders and the black and white cattle—all such as Metzu, Van Ostade, and that supreme master, Vermeer, delighted to reduce to their exquisite canvases.

Many of the interior scenes, even to the customs, could be reconstructed even now, a few miles from the derricks and electric standards, the huge liners and sumptuous hotels.

Many little homes yet contain all the objects to compose the beautiful picture by Nicholas Maes, " Het Gebed Zonder einde " (Endless Prayer). This unique masterpiece, so homely, yet so delicate, so uncommon, yet composed from material that must have been close to the artist's hand, is like an epitome of Dutch home life among the people, so decent, cleanly, gracious, so full of quiet gratitude for the peace and comfort which, when Maes painted this picture, had not long been purchased with the heroic suffering of a long, colossal, and superb contest.

This painting is a type of many, in which the Netherlander, with simplicity and piety, seems to thank his God for the liberty he had almost incredibly wrested from black tyranny and bitter oppression.

It is very notable that in all the zest of the great prosperity of the Golden Age of the Netherlands, when material things were so sought after and prized and spiritual things seem to have been so little heeded, there was no vulgarity in the Dutch. Even the boors and peasants, soldiers and shop people, we see living with such gusto in the pictures of the nineteenth century, are not vulgar in any sense of the word ; they are as natural as children or animals, as jolly, as kind, as rude and coarse, too, but not vulgar.

The absence of this vulgarity is very obvious to-day ; there is no pretence, no sham, no posing, no cheap gaudiness nor tawdry display. The foundations of the national life appear to be as beautifully laid as the little narrow bricks of their houses, and the luxuries thereof to be as discreetly chosen as the festoons of fruit and elegant swags that, in delicate relief, adorn the neat façades. The stranger notes the absence of any pose of boredom or world weariness ; there is no feverish search for distraction or diversion, no furious iconoclastic energy. An intelligent, well-educated people, not ashamed of either intelligence or education as are so many English, the Dutch are by no means as heavy and stolid as their legend declares. To one observer, at least, the myth of Dutch phlegm seems as false as that of French gaiety ; activity, industry, enthusiasm, initiative show in every phase of the national life, the air of repose and order appears more due to contentment than dullness. If the Northerners seem dour, they are no more so than the Scotch, nor indeed than any people who have to struggle with rigorous climate, and among themselves the Frieslanders are a cheerful, vigorous, animated people, fond of work and sport, the fireside, and the open air. Nowhere did the present writer discern the apathy of misery or the sullenness of stupidity such as is too often seen in countries that have a reputation for wit and liveliness.

This country is also mislabelled in being considered by outsiders as a land of peasants and shopkeepers, very democratic and commercial. This is partially true, but the real atmosphere of the land is patrician ; the class feeling is stronger than in England, etiquette more important, courtesies more exact, and the democracy of the general is pleasantly contradicted by the autocracy of the individual. You will see this autocratic air in the castles, in the town houses of the nobility, in the towns themselves, in the country seats—it is all small, quiet, even plain, but there is the sense of distinction, of exclusiveness, of a dignified tradition preserved inviolate. There are the same notes of choiceness, of rich colour, of rarity in the pictures by Huysum, by Hondedecter, by Janssens, by Ruysdael, the portraits by Mierevelt, Ravensteyn, and the Honthorsts. These were painted to embellish the noble rooms with the walls panelled or coloured the characteristic pea green, to hang close to cabinets with the squat ball feet containing engraved glass and coloured Delft, all gently illuminated by the blonde light that flows through the beech trees on to the shaven lawns, the neat beds, the globe sundial, and the tortoiseshell cat asleep on the low warm brick wall.

It is the rich touch of opulent Eastern luxury introduced into the austere ordered life of the North that is so intensely pictorial by reason of sheer contrast and of vivid association. All the fantastic

shapes of Indian imaginings, all the exotic figures and fancies of the oriental mind, all the colours of lacquer, bronze and ivory, alabaster and porcelain, have been, since the early days of the East India Company, incorporated in the sober, dignified daily life of the people ; the alien shapes and tints show vividly in the clear economy of this fair light of the North, and the contrast is charmingly piquant and hallowed by centuries. In 1672, when the Netherlands was undergoing one of the worst crisis of her heroic history, a certain doctor of Alkmaar, Cornelius van Bontekoe, published at The Hague a treatise on " That Excellent Herb—Tea " ; here, too, a contrast piquant and vivid. Tea-making is still in the Netherlands the fine art it once was in England, and the fragrant China tea now served in the treasured eggshell handle-less cups is hardly a relation to the crude Ceylon brew with which we content ourselves. The Eastern aroma still lingers about the infusion as about the delicious coffee, the rich cocoa and chocolates, the juicy preserves and dried fruits, all of which might have been unloaded yesterday from the barges on the Middelburg canals that paused before the store-house of the East India Company, while bales of rich perfumed merchandise were fixed to the handsome hoists you may still see, though they now hang over a bricked-in road.

The link with the East is seen as strongly in the flowers ; no indigenous bloom has ever been prized so fiercely as the Persian Tulip or the Chinese Dahlia. Here again these gorgeous blossoms that have a certain lustre as of metal or satin, lacquer or velvet, and seem fitted to torrid skies and lazy radiance of azure air, grow in ordered perfection in this chill gold light and show fantastic loveliness in drilled fields of artificial cultures.

The flower shops are surely the most charming in the world ; there are so many of them, they are so well arranged, and the blooms within are so uncommon and choice, they carry, these shops, an air of extravagant and tasteful luxury into the most prim and quiet of streets. Indeed, in all the shops you may see the Dutchman's love of still life, no mechanical displaying of merchandise to the best advantage, but a loving adjustment of material objects with a view to pictorial effect. The big cosmopolitan *magasin*, filled with articles of international manufacture, is, of course, elbowing out these little shops, but you may still see them in plenty, models for Weenix or De Heem, a racial characteristic surviving, perhaps as a mere tradition, perhaps unconsciously.

Although farther North the Netherlands are less touched by encroaching changes, yet even nearer to England one may find not only whole streets, but almost whole towns dating from the Golden Age of Frederic Henry and the comfortable years of the seventeenth

century. Middelburg is almost perfect, and Dordt has yet escaped the too blatant trams and motor 'buses and much change beyond the universal filling in of canals.

This island town is strangely attractive, very typical, to a foreigner, of the whole country both in history, association, and present appearance, save that the Stadhuis is ugly, of the wrong period, and out of time with the town.

The old church here, rising, as it seems, from the very midst of the water and the shipping, with its clock perched on the extreme top of the steeple (as if St Ursula had put on a Calvinist hat)—the Grootshoofds Poort, the ancient bombastic looking gate opening on the placid reaches of the Merwede and the Meuse, along which white and brown sails still dip and swell, these are some of the pleasant things of Holland ; and in some sense Dordt is sacred ground, for here was held the first assembly of the United Independent States in 1572, and here were born the noble patriots, the brothers De Witt.

The history of the Dutch seems still very much alive in their towns and fields, their seas and villages ; it is difficult to explain this, which every stranger must feel keenly, especially an English stranger, who must go to museums for his own history which seems both overlaid and forgotten.

Europe and modern civilisation owes a great debt to this vigorous, industrious, and intelligent people, both from their inventions and discoveries, and their example. The first free state in modern history (save Switzerland, too isolated then to count in European affairs), the Netherlands received an ill reward for her fortitude and constancy. It is ugly reading, the successive attacks of England and France on the land that had so hardly won freedom, and asked only leave to live in peace ; but it is fine reading how there were no lack of heroes to preserve the liberties dead heroes had won. You may see them yet, scattered up and down the land : the brothers Evertzen in Middelburg, lying serenely between the marble ships that for ever float on a windless sea, both slain the same year, the " Annus Mirabilis " of Dryden, in the most miserable war ever waged by England ; De Ruyter in Amsterdam, with his flowing flags and conch blowing nymphs and massive quarterings, all doing honour to his stalwart figure where he lies, resolute, contained, typical of the genius of his race—*immensi tremour Oceani ;* Van Gent at Utrecht, very beautiful this, the gracious cavalier, lying prone on his draperies, the dead face with the startling look of a likeness. Van Gent fell in 1672 (that same year of the little treatise on tea) at the second battle of Sole Bay, near the romantic, now dead, town of Dunwich, where, long after, the Dutch cannon balls were picked up in the crumbling ground the sea was claiming. The great sea fight is associated

with the dark, limpid, lovely pictures of the Van der Veldes, who knew how to turn the horrors of carnage into things of beauty.

Here the two combatant countries seem much the same; Dunwich, the twelve hundred year old town, once the capital of England, backed against the green meadows and flats of Suffolk, with the red cottages, wind and water mills, and the ancient churches, must have looked like the coasts of Zeeland or Holland to the sailors on board the beautiful "Eendracht," Obdam's flagship, blown to bits off these flats. Had the Suffolk people built dykes, they would have preserved their old town, but now the sea has taken it, churches and all, and nothing remains save that memory of the cannon balls afterwards turned up, the vision of the Dutch fleet in Southwold Bay on these two occasions, and the grandiose tombs in Middelburg and Utrecht, with Van der Velde's pictures and the English ballad that seems to illustrate them :—

"I cannot stay to name the names
Of all the ships that fought with James,
Their number or their tonnage;
But this I say the noble host
Right gallantly did take its post
And covered all the hollow coast
From Walberswyck to Dunwich!"

"Hollow coast" would describe the Netherlands, and has not *Walberswyck* a Dutch sound?

Fine, jolly sea fights there were, no doubt, and splendid essays of arms behind the two leading maritime nations of the world, had not all the right been on one side and all the wrong on the other. Another giant of the long struggle lies in Delft Oude Kerk, Maarten Tromp, and near him that proper champion of Romance, Piet Hein, whose capture of the Silver Fleet must have been the prototype for all such gallant deeds of "daring do." In this self-same church the name of Leeuwenhoek reminds us of what science owes this people. From Delft, where the first William of Orange lies slain, it is but a short distance to Leyden, where stands the university he granted as a reward for their incredible loyalty and courage through the great siege, and there, under the thick, pleasant trees, passing the arched bridges over the shadowed canals, you may find the place hallowed indeed by the memory of great men, Scaliger, Grotius, and Boerhaave. Arminius and Gomarus are among them, and here, in earlier day, were born some of the painters who helped to make the glory of the Netherlands, Lucas van Leyden, Jan Steen, Gerard Douw, Gabriel Metzu, Van Goyen, and he who is among the very greatest in the world, Rembrandt.

And how many English exiles have wandered here, in gown or

with ruffles and sword, pricing a book in a shop on the Papenberg, wandering out through the Morsch Gate, dreaming of home, yet safe and contented in this generous asylum !

There are indeed some of the finest, noblest associations of the English with the Netherlands ; not only in Leyden, but in The Hague and Amsterdam are the haunts where our exiles found peace and protection—in the only country in the world in which it was then to be found. Here was Stewart and Cromwellian alike unmolested, here men like Locke, Stair, Burnet, and the founder of the Brownists ; Carstairs and Argyll found a resting-place here ; in Amsterdam poor hounded, maligned Shaftesbury died, in peace at last. There is hardly a spot in North and South Holland where some English exile has not lived at some time or other, while escaping the persecutions of his native land ; many of them were or have since become famous, thousands of them lived and died unknown—the memory of them remains green, to the eternal honour of the High Mightiness the States General, who so nobly shared their own birthright of inviolate liberty.

The freedom of the press was, of course, another great attraction of this country to these exiles, and has made the Netherlands, through Descartes and Spinoza, the foremost seat of intellect in the world. Locke wrote with passionate love of Holland, and even when he was free to return home, regretted leaving his kind, true friends there. How many must have shared his sentiments, and how closely knit in much the two nations were even while the rapacious dictates of tyranny caused them to battle together on the North Sea !

It was probably from his friends the Dutch that Locke learnt many of his medical views, then so advanced for England, and it is certain that from them he received his *thesis* for his famous essay on toleration, which was a virtue practically unknown among the English. Even the exiles themselves, as, for instance, the Pilgrim Fathers, had much to learn in this direction.

Long before Locke sheltered here, a Dutchman had laughed away the autocratic pretension of the monks ; Erasmus loved England as Locke loved Holland. The genial, charming reformer, though commemorated in Rotterdam, comes more humanly to mind in Gouda, his parents' town ; near by was the convent where little Gerard, caught pear stealing, counterfeited the limp of a lame monk, and so escaped in the dark—a story too painfully like that of Rousseau and the maid servant, and that would be true of any caned child.

Erasmus himself said that he was not of the stuff of which martyrs were made. But he stood for more, and accomplished more than many a martyr, of whom there were far too many in these bad old days.

Even before the time of Erasmus, English exiles of no mean repute

had fled to the Low Countries; after the battle of Wakefield, the Duchess of York and her two young sons fled to Utrecht. Later, one of these two, Richard, with his brother Edward, fled from Lynn, Norfolk, to Alkmaar, and hence to the princely Hague. From Veere, in 1471, they sailed with the little fleet equipped for them by their brother-in-law, Charles the Bold. Edward IV., the handsome, gallant king, and York, afterwards the bitterly maligned Richard III., also were among them.

Veere, now a most melancholy spot, has associations with two other of our kings, James I. of Scotland's daughter having married the Lord of Veere, and so making it a staple for the Scottish trade, and it being afterwards one of the fiefs of William III., whose gift of door handles may be yet seen in the Town Hall. But Veere, like Hoorn and Enkhuizen, is (and even more so) dead and desolate, ghost-ridden and haunted. Here one gets the full savour of the flats, the veiled dunes, the dun skies, the tossed clouds, the salt tang, and the blowing of the wind bitten trees; but this atmosphere of decay is not that of the Netherlands, which is warm, cheerful, prosperous, and energetic, but merely that of this spot that chance has given a decay so curiously in unison with the forlorn character of the landscape.

Dutch farming was, in early days, a hundred years ahead of the English, who learnt most of their science from the Netherlands, and even nowadays the Dutch farms all seem to an English eye what we call "model." These farms, all much the same, and not picturesque or romantic looking, in the usual sense of the words, have a peculiar and indefinable charm; the neat buildings, rising from the lush flats, with the screen of trees, either trained espalier wise or rising in tall, graceful groups above the roof line, have a most pleasing effect of premeditated design, like an exact, accomplished drawing, such as indeed you may still see, in faded puces and blues, on old tiles.

The avenues of these same thin, spare trees that seem truly to be endless, have also this effect of deliberate grace. The cause, of course, is that nothing is natural in the country, and this artificial training of nature makes the land extraordinarily characteristic of the people; for in all other countries the face of nature has subordinated the tastes, types, and even the character of the inhabitants; here human beings have taken a marsh, reclaimed it, and fashioned it after their own pattern, with beauty, unique and pleasing.

The immense horizon, the long distance, the vast sky space, the changing cloud and mist effects invest with a strangely remote and peaceful air the modern evidences of a great commercial nation; the great derricks, cranes, and bridges, the huge docks, wharves, and warehouses, the lively waterways, rivers, canals, and seas, are all

transmuted to a wide dignity, a graceful if sombre composition of bulk and line that has none of the depression or sordidness usually associated with the busy traffic of modern enterprise.

The water, especially in the evening and at night, with the natural lights make the utilitarian city of Rotterdam majestically beautiful ; here the hum and throb of human activity is set so exactly in the air, light, and water, that these elements soften and subdue all that is harsh, crude, or ugly.

The whole country lingers in the memory with an effect of muted colours, touched here and there with brightness and hazed by this copious blonde light flowing from the high heavens ; this light pure gold shows here and there in the hair and complexions of the Dutch women, the type that Mierevelt painted, that so well suited the rich satins, opulent laces, and whose lovely throats and hands were so well set off by the thick strings of pearls.

So, like the first faint scribblings of a sketch for a portrait, are these sparse impressions of a country from a foreigner, to whom the Netherlands is a pleasant country—and a great one.

AS IT HAPPENED

By CLEMENCE DANE

OXFORD Street is a fine sight towards Christmas when the sun shines and the shoppers throng the pavements; but the wind is bitter at the street corners.

I heard a tune as I came out of a hat shop, a floating spider's thread of sound that caught and drew me after it. A slender little gentleman was standing by the curb, a battered fiddle under his chin. He was so like my own father that he made my heart ache.

I said, covering the hatefulness of almsgiving as best I could, "What a pretty tune that is! It's like a bit of sunshine. It did me good to hear it. What is it?"

He answered, in the pleasant precise accents of an earlier generation, "Bach's 'Chaconne.'"

I said, "I don't understand music, but I think it's beautiful."

He said serenely, "I have been paid twenty guineas to play people that tune. I was in an orchestra. But I broke my finger——"

He did not say any more. It was I who began to say, fumbling, "I am very sorry. It—it's a hard world." What else could I say?

He smiled slightly without answering. He was too courteous to turn again to his fiddling while I was beside him, but I felt an unspoken "What are you waiting for? What can you do?"

What could I do? After all, what can one do? I had a train to catch.

I said, awkwardly, "Well, good luck!"

He bowed. I left him. As I turned into the tube I heard the "Chaconne" once more through the noises of the traffic, a thread of music, golden as his courage, frail as his forlorn old age.

Oxford Street is a fine sight on a sunny winter day; but the wind is bitter at the street corners.

THE LOCUM TENENS

By FRANCIS GRIBBLE

THE Honourable William Blunt, whom his friends called Billy, was a fat and jolly little sportsman, with a chubby face and close cropped hair. Attired in a check suit so loud that you could hear it coming long before it came, he entered the empty smoking-room of the hotel at Splashcombe-on-Sea, lighted a cigarette, called for sherry-and-bitters, made himself comfortable on two chairs, and reflected genially : " Good old Bradley ! Wonderful man, Bradley ! It must be about time to move along to the chapel and give Bradley a hand."

He and Bradley had been at Eton together, though they had since gone different ways. Billy was now a sportsman, and Bradley was now a Member of Parliament. Bradley had promised to deliver an address to the Splashcombe Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Society. A local Methodist chapel had been lent for the purpose ; and Billy and other boon companions had promised to be present and lead the applause.

But now the boon companions streamed into the smoking-room with shocking news. Bradley was in no condition to deliver his lecture—or, as the boon companions put it, to preach his sermon. He had got nervous ; he had been taking whiskies and sodas all the afternoon to steady his nerves.

" And he's taken two or three too many, and now he's just blind —speechless—paralytic."

A shocking situation, truly ! Bradley's public career would be over for ever if the story got about. But how to suppress it ? Billy was willing to do anything in reason to help his friend, but had not the faintest idea what to do. The boon companions, however, had a plan. They leant over Billy and spoke to him in mysterious whispers :

" Billy, old man," they said, " you're Bradley's pal ? You'll stand by him ? "

" Of course I will, so long as he's able to stand himself."

" Well, look here ! Bradley's a stranger at Splashcombe. They don't know him by sight. There aren't any of his photographs about. So, if you were to personate him——"

"If I were to do *what?*"

"Personate him. Pretend that you're Bradley. Drive round to the chapel and preach Bradley's sermon for him, while we sit on his head and keep him quiet."

"Give me a drink!" said Billy.

They brought him a whisky and soda. He swallowed it at a gulp, and it braced him. He had about as much notion of public speaking as of performing on the flying trapeze; but he felt that the case was serious and called for heroic measures. If Bradley's reputation *could* be saved by this innocent fraud on the public——

"You think I can do it, really?" he asked.

"Of course you can do it, Billy."

"Right-o! I'll have a try. Get me a cab."

They sent for one; but while it was coming, Billy remembered yet another difficulty.

"Well, what is it now?"

"You haven't told me what the sermon's got to be about."

"I thought you knew—it's on all the posters: *Strenuous Lives.*"

"What do you say—*Strenuous Wives?*"

"No, no, no, Billy—*Strenuous Lives.*"

"What does it mean?"

"Bucking up and all that sort of thing."

"What ought I to say about it?"

"Lord knows. You'll have to think of something in the cab;" and they hustled him into it before he had time to lose his courage and change his mind.

"Right-o," he said, waving his hand to them; and, ten minutes later, he was bouncing out of the cab into the midst of a surprised Committee of Reception.

They were grave men in black, with suitable beards and whiskers, who expected to receive a youth as earnest as themselves, attired in a correct frock coat; and it astonished them not a little to be saluted by this jolly, red-faced sportsman, in a check suit and a gaudy tie, who shook hands with effusion, and apologised for being late.

"Whole chapter of accidents! Poor old Bradley—I mean to say poor old me! But never mind! I'll tell you about it later. I dare say we shall get on all right if I put my back into it."

The Committee, more puzzled than ever, but too polite to make remarks, conducted their lecturer to the vestry, where nervousness began to overtake him. He was not used to vestries, and he felt that his costume was ill adapted to his serious surroundings.

"If you'd like to lend me some sort of wrapper to cover up these togs——," he suggested; but the Committee explained that, as the occasion was secular, there was no need for the lecturer to assume

ecclesiastical apparel ; and then, having inquired whether Billy was quite ready, they guided him into the chapel itself, and indicated the pulpit at the extremity of the platform.

" You don't mean to say I've got to go up there ? " Billy asked, showing signs of alarm.

" If you don't mind—it's the usual place—you'll be quite comfortable there, I think," said the President reassuringly.

" Right-o," said Billy, with a last desperate attempt at cheerfulness ; and then he climbed the stairs with a sinking heart and the sensations of a mariner who has lost his bearings.

It was an awful moment. Billy knew that he must look odd in a pulpit—he felt sure that his audience were laughing at him. His embarrassment was the greater because he had not the faintest idea what he was going to say to them. He would have liked to run back down those pulpit stairs, and bolt like a rabbit for its burrow ; but the thought of his friend's reputation, which he had undertaken to save, kept him like a soldier at the post of duty.

" Poor old Bradley ! Must get through it somehow for poor old Bradley's sake, so here goes," he said to himself ; and then he clenched his fists and made his plunge.

" Ladies and gentlemen," he began, " unaccustomed as I am to public speaking——" and the members of the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Society began to titter.

The titter gave Billy time to drink a glass of water. He drained the tumbler amid applause ; and then, sticking to his guns like a hero, plunged *in medias res*.

" The subject of this evening's sermon—I mean to say this evening's lecture—is—er—a little talk about your Strenuous Wives —(laughter)—I mean to say your Strenuous Lives (applause). Perhaps you don't know what Strenuous Lives means (murmurs). Well, I do (ironical cheers). I wasn't fool enough to come here without finding out. Strenuous Lives means bucking up and all that sort of thing."

There were cheers without laughter this time, and Billy felt encouraged. Another sentiment suggested itself.

" I don't mind telling you," he said, " that I bucked up a bit myself this afternoon. Backed three winners, my boys—two of 'em rank outsiders."

There was " movement " at that. Billy saw that he had put his foot in it. He blushed and stuttered ; but the saving inspiration came in time :

" So, if the hat's going round presently for any little charitable kick-up, you needn't feel shy of passing it in my direction."

That covered the ground. The President, who had risen to

protest, thought better of it and resumed his seat; while Billy recovered himself, warmed to his subject, and became almost fluent.

"But never you mind about me," he said modestly. "I'm one of the people who only buck up now and again when they're put on to a really good thing (cries of "no, no"). The people you ought to look at are the people who buck up all the time. Look at——"

He gazed round the chapel for an illustration. He saw the first, and others sprang to his mind as he sawed the air and thumped the cushion.

"Look at the Boy Scouts! (cheers). Look at the Royal Family! (deafening applause). Look at the Fire Brigade! Look at Lloyd George and Winston Churchill! (cries of "good old Winston" and "good old Lloyd George"). Look at Lady Astor! Look at Hendren hooking 'em for six before they know where they are! Look at——"

The flow temporarily ceased. Billy had to look round among his audience for further examples and take whatever came to hand.

"Look at that gay young airman in the back row squeezing the young woman next to him! (loud laughter). Look at your Pastor there—(renewed laughter)—no, I don't mean that *he's* squeezing anybody—(still louder laughter)—he wouldn't do such a thing for worlds, I know—but look at him all the same—bucking up like one o'clock to get me here to give you a pleasant evening! Look at him, I say! Look at——"

It seemed as if Billy were really under weigh at last, and might have gone on like that for ever so long, but his fluency failed him in the very middle of a sentence.

"Good Lord!" he suddenly exclaimed, and flushed a vivid scarlet, and stopped dead, as though his tongue had been paralysed.

One would have said that he had seen a ghost; and, in truth, he had seen something very nearly as startling. For there, at the back of the hall, was no other than Athelstan Bradley himself—Athelstan Bradley, whom he was impersonating to save his reputation for sobriety. It was no wonder that Billy staggered and was struck dumb.

"Poor old Bradley!" he thought. "It's all up with him now. Coming along here with all that whisky on board, instead of keeping quiet while I ran his show for him! What the deuce——"

But the extraordinary thing was that Athelstan Bradley was not staggering, or shouting, or gesticulating, or singing, or doing any of the other things that one expects an intoxicated man to do. He was a little flushed, but perfectly steady on his legs; and he and certain members of the Committee were putting their heads together and whispering. Billy had to make what he could of that.

"Taken a pick-me-up after all, then," was what he made of it. "Quick-working sort of pick-me-up, too. Useful sort of pick-me-up to know of. But—what the deuce——"

For Billy, of course, had to think of himself as well as his friend. His position was very awkward, and would soon be very undignified. That whispering in the corner betokened the hatching of a plot which could not bode any good to him. He could only guess what was likely to happen; but it seemed to him that his choice lay between quitting the pulpit of his own accord and being forcibly ejected from it as an imposter—a sorry end, truly, to his heroic act of self-sacrifice.

"Just as I was getting on so nicely, too," he thought. "Bradley ought to be ashamed of himself. It'd serve him right if I blew the gaff on him."

But loyalty forbade. Whatever happened, Billy would not give his friend away. Yet, if he did not, what was he to do? He once more looked round the chapel for inspiration.

"There's the door," he reflected. "Perhaps if I made a bolt for it——"

But the way to the door lay through the midst of the audience, whom his sudden silence had amazed. He might, of course, produce his handkerchief, and pretend that his nose was bleeding; but there was probably some doctor present who would rush forward to treat him, and so discover the deceit. That would be shockingly undignified. The best plan, after all, was to wind up the discourse and wait upon events.

He hesitated between a peroration and a doxology, but decided on a peroration.

"There," he said, at last terminating the awful pause. "I've told you all I know about bucking up, and now I'd better buck down and give somebody else a chance."

There was applause at that—Billy could not make out whether it was ironical applause or not. His mind was full of indignation at the cruel irony of the fate which had overtaken him. He had meant so well — he had begun to get along so nicely — and this was his reward—to be publicly covered with inextinguishable shame. He could not get near Bradley to reproach him; so he sat down on a vacant seat at the edge of the platform, hid his face with his hands, and waited for the blow to fall.

"Rub it in—rub it in," he murmured bitterly, as he saw the Pastor of the Chapel—a grave man with a long coal-black beard—mount slowly to the rostrum from which he himself had fled.

He did not see the twinkle in the Pastor's eye. He only knew, roughly speaking, what he himself would have said if he had been

in the Pastor's place. And now there was a silence in which one could have heard a pin drop, and the Pastor was beginning.

"Friends," he began.

"Oh, that's what I ought to have called 'em, is it?" thought Billy.

"Friends," the Pastor proceeded, "I have a somewhat singular announcement to make to you. I have to inform you of what some of you may perhaps have suspected—that we have this evening been the victims of a pleasantry."

"Pleasantry! Good Lord!" muttered Billy between his fingers.

"A pleasantry, I think, not in the very best of taste."

"Best of taste!" repeated Billy, in melancholy despair.

"It appears that some jocose person, sadly lacking in respect for serious things——"

"Good Lord! Now it's coming. Now he's going to rub it in," thought Billy.

"——hearing that our lecturer, Mr Athelstan Bradley, had been delayed by a breakdown on the railway, conceived that it would be a happy stroke of humour to rush to Mr Bradley's friend, the Honourable William Blunt——"

"Hullo! What's that? Now I begin to see daylight," interjected Billy, venturing at last to look up.

"——with the absurd story that the lecturer was incapacitated by a disgraceful reason, which could not be avowed (cries of "shame"). A great shame, my friends! A very great shame, indeed! Yet a shameful act, the consequences of which are not altogether to be deplored. The Honourable William Blunt——"

"What! Is he going to butter me, after all?" wondered Billy; and it seemed that that was what the Pastor was, indeed, about to do.

"The Honourable William Blunt had no time to inquire into the truth of that outrageous calumny. His one thought was to save his friend from imminent disgrace (cheers). Unaccustomed as he was to public speaking—(laughter)—he instantly offered himself as his friend's—er—*locum tenens*, and undertook to—er—improvise an address in his name and on his behalf (loud applause). My friends, we have listened to that address. It was, to speak without flattery——"

"Draw it mild—draw it mild," protested Billy.

"——an address of great vigour, and striking and unconventional originality (loud cheers). Nor is that all. The mere fact that a young man, unaccustomed, as he assured us, to public speaking—(laughter)—plunged into the breach, in such circumstances, to protect

a friend's fair fame, seems to me as graphic an illustration as any of us could desire of that Strenuous Life—that virtue of bucking up, as he so vividly styled it—which was the subject of his brilliant, though untutored, oratory (tremendous cheers). I have much pleasure, therefore, in moving a cordial vote of thanks to the Honourable William Blunt. I am quite sure that you will carry it unanimously ; and if you like to sing ' He's a jolly good fellow ' when you get outside, you will only be paying him the homage which he deserves."

Then he descended from the pulpit and went up to Billy and shook him by the hand ; and Athelstan Bradley joined the party and shook hands too. And when they left the chapel, the members of the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Society not only sang " He's a jolly good fellow," in obedience to their Pastor's injunction, but took the horse out of the shafts and drew Billy back in triumph to his hotel—the men cheering, and the ladies waving their handkerchiefs, with an enthusiasm which Billy had never dreamed them capable of.

" And then, of course," Billy added, when he told the story, " I invited them all to come in and have a drink with their preacher ; and in they came—those young Mutual Improvers—two and two—male and female—till the lounge was packed ; and, so far as I could make out, there wasn't a teetotaller among them."

THE PAGE STREET CANTEEN

INARTICULATE ENGLAND

By SIR PHILIP GIBBS, K.B.E.

IN this time of political crisis and financial depression there is one thing which I and most people want to know above all other things, and nobody seems able to tell us: What is the spirit of the people? What are they all thinking about? I mean the unemployed men and women, little families in back streets making both ends meet somehow or other—or not doing so—farm labourers watching so many fields being turned back to grass, clerks and small shopkeepers of country towns, factory hands on short time in the Black Country and on the Clyde, this nation of ours and its mass mind.

The election did not tell us very much of what the people were thinking, except that most of them were afraid of Protection because it would increase the cost of living. In spite of, or because of, the spate of political articles swamping all other interests in the newspapers, it seemed impossible to get one glimmer of light revealing the mind of the people to whom the politicians addressed their appeals, their arguments, and their lies.

There was some hooliganism here and there in the constituencies, but no great excitement among masses of men and women, no violence of speech and action beyond the control of a few policemen, only, it seemed to me, a mild, amused interest in the nation as a whole when the results were known. That is how it appeared to foreign observers, more startled and more excited than the English folk because Labour had captured the chance of government.

Apart altogether from party politics and this immediate historical crisis which will alter many things in our social state and cut at the roots of old traditions, the people are very silent, very inarticulate, utterly unrepresented in the national Press. Special correspondents go to Luxor, but not to Limehouse. Letters to the Editor come from Mayfair, Belgravia, the Universities, and country rectories, but no word comes from Rowton House, the coffee stalls in the Commercial Road, or the back streets of Bermondsey. There is no expression of the point of view in these acres of mean streets and semi-detached villas which house the greater part of our population. The daily Press preaches at them, exhorts them, seeks to amuse

them, thrill them, lead them, but they do not answer back. They remain silent and mysterious.

Is there a spirit of revolt working in " the underworld," ready to pounce out and do dreadful things, as some great people seem to fear ? Well, lately I have been talking to unemployed men in refuges and canteens and places where they look for work. What has impressed me most is the apparent lack of bitterness among them, or, at least, the absence of any expression of passion or revolt.

The men I spoke to may have been hiding that in their hearts, but certainly they did not flame out into any violence of speech. They talked in a matter-of-fact way about the slackness of trade. Some of them had been out of a job for eighteen months or more. Many of them did not seem to get the dole. They were down and out for the time being, or getting odd jobs, by which they just manage to keep going this side of starvation. They hoped things would " buck up " presently. Otherwise they didn't see what was going to happen.

Things were in a bad way, they agreed, and they could not see much chance for unskilled men and casual labour. They were unskilled, most of them, because they had been in the war, and had not been apprenticed to any trade. How could they when they were out in the trenches ? Might as well have stayed there, perhaps. . . .

That is how they talked when I questioned them. Not a word about Communism or the plans of a Labour Government, or any threat against Society for their present hard luck. It seemed to them a kind of fatality, not to be helped, like cold weather or illness.

Decent fellows, I thought, well spoken, with good manners, not yet in rags, careful to wash themselves and look as smart as possible. I was surprised by their patience, their good nature, and their resignation to a miserable way of life. Perhaps there was something demoralised and weak in that patience. But not among that kind of crowd can one find anything to build the bogey of Red terror.

I think the worst thing that can be charged up against " the underworld " at the present time is a gradual sapping of *moral* due to the dole, and lack of regular work, which is not their fault. There are hundreds of thousands of men at the best age of their life learning to be content more or less with a haphazard existence of odd jobs, eked out by public help and private charity, between spells of State-aided idleness. When once men get into that condition they become incapable of real work, mentally as well as physically, and it must be admitted, as I know from personal experiment, that one cannot help them very much because they have lost the power of helping themselves. But it is no fault of theirs that, in the Army and out

of it, they were not trained to individual initiative and self-reliance. It is not any essential wickedness in their nature.

On the contrary, they are very civil fellows, free from any criminal instinct, for the most part, and not in the least brutalised as yet by hardship and squalor like some of the old crowd of casual labourers in the years before the war. They have still, I believe, that wonderful good-nature and patience which belonged to them when they trudged through the swamps of Flanders or the sands of Egypt.

From the Clyde I had a letter the other day from an out-of-work shipyard man. He has been eighteen months without a stroke of work, and has put in his time in the public library, reading omnivorously. Amongst the novelists he likes Hardy best—" real stuff "—and after Hardy, Dickens and George Eliot. Lately he has been attacking history, and asks advice about the best books. Not a bad way of spending unemployed time, though not profitable in the way of bread and butter for wife and bairns.

In classes less unlucky than the out-of-works, in all the great crowds of city populations living very close to the weekly wage, but squeezing out a little margin for the fun of life, there seems to be that quality of character which has kept England calm and steady through many troubled chapters of history. It is not any conscious wisdom, I think. It is not intellectual judgment. It is some deep, subconscious, traditional instinct of courage, some innate faith in the power of the race to pull through, whatever happens—a refusal to give way to funk.

Sometimes it seems like sheer stupidity, an intellectual inability to realise plain facts, as when during the worst days of the war they kept cheerful, though their sons and brothers were being slaughtered in masses. I know some fighting men home on leave who were shocked by the " callousness " of their own folk, as it seemed to them, at their " damned cheeriness," when it was hell at the Front.

So now, when trade is pretty bad, when taxes are crushing, when agriculture is dying or dead, when foot-and-mouth disease is destroying our herds, when the European situation is full of peril to us, when the English pound is looking silly in the face of the dollar, when prophets of woe are envisaging the end of all things because Labour has come into power, there are peevish people who are exasperated at the indifference of the public, and rage in their hearts because the streets are filled with cheerful faces, because the shops are crowded with women hunting for bargains at the sales, because the picture palaces are thronged with folk who roar with laughter at the funny turns, thrill to the emotion of romantic nonsense, applaud the strong, silent man who rescues the fluffy-haired and goggle-eyed heroine.

" Will they take nothing seriously ? " asked a friend of mine who is seriously disturbed about the future of India, and believes that Mr Ramsay MacDonald will make a present of it to seditious natives. Some of the newspapers are beating up a scare about the Socialists, pouring out columns of dark forebodings on millions of breakfast tables, but, seemingly, without any influence on the nerves of the nation as a whole.

Is it stupidity, this refusal to be frightened ? Is it carelessness, or frivolity, or ignorance which is keeping the middle-classes unperturbed and tranquil, as far as all outward signs go, in this time of political crisis and national hardship ? Foreigners do not think so. They think it is that traditional character which they have observed over here in many crises of history.

I was talking recently to a distinguished American who knows us well, and he was full of admiration for the calm spirit of the English people at the present time.

" There will never be a revolution in England," he said, with absolute conviction. " Your people are wonderfully level-minded and fair-minded. I think it is perfectly astonishing how, in spite of her own troubles, England stands for fair play in Europe and gives a spiritual leadership to the rest of the world. There is a good nature in the English character which nothing can spoil or sour. I don't believe that your folk have lost the splendour of unselfishness which reached such heights of sacrifice in the war."

He believed that the instinct of our people is against all extremes of thought and violent breaks with tradition, and that the Labour Party, now that it is in power, will have to moderate its views and actions in accordance with that character of England which keeps stolidly to " the middle of the road."

It is certain to my mind that these foreign observers are right. For a time after the war, when millions of demobilised men streamed back home excited by promises which were unfulfilled, glad to be free of discipline, but finding it hard to get back to the humdrum of civil life, and rather bitter after the experience of war, there was a good deal of revolutionary and wild talk. The Russian experiment of Communism had not yet been revealed as a ghastly failure. The spirit of the European mind, and ours, was shaken by the tremendous agony of its experience, and filled with vague ideals of a new and changed world.

The disillusion that followed did lead to passionate revolt, and at street corners I listened to dangerous talk from ex-Service men. For six months or so in 1919 there was, I honestly think, some chance of civil disorders in England on a serious scale. Since then the spirit of revolt has died down, and it is only going to be reawakened by

folly or wickedness, not on the part of the men, but their leaders. A black reaction of a Die-hard Government would set it going again and light fires of passion which would not quickly be put out. Any unconstitutional trick to turn Labour out, would incite the Labour leaders to play for revolution rather than for political influence.

But at the present time the spirit of the people, as far as I know it, is not in the least inclined either to fear or passion or violent experiment. I believe that there is a steady common-sense in the middle-class crowd, especially among those who live in the mean streets of life, which is nobler, sweeter, in a way prouder and more patriotic, than the spirit one finds in richer crowds or among professional politicians manœuvring for place and power. They want nothing more than peace abroad, better business at home, a chance of work for the younger men, and a little margin for evening recreation. In my belief, they are not going to support any wild men who are out to make trouble, in any party, and they are " fed up " with hot air, either in the mouths of politicians or the columns of newspapers. Unfortunately, the little they ask is difficult to give, as any Government will find, but the patience of the people will last a little longer yet.

*** *This article is reprinted by kind permission of the* Sunday Times.

WILL CROOKS, LECTURER

(A Memory)

By FREDERIC WHYTE

THE lecture was to be given in Whitefield's Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road. I had asked an architect friend to come with me, but he declined on the ground that the building always made him feel sick. It is not a beautiful structure, but it is spacious, and you can hear well in it, and for a lecturer these are qualities which outweigh æsthetic defects. Outside stood a small, rather squat figure of a man—he was peering in between the railings at the conspicuous announcement of the lecture on a notice-board. There was something familiar about the cut of the clothes, especially the short, double-breasted, very thick, dark blue overcoat. Surely, it was a character from one of W. W. Jacobs's short stories—some sturdy skipper taking a night off and at a loss for amusement! I went closer. Well, I was not so far wrong. It was Will Crooks himself.

Not so far wrong, because, in the first place (as he was to remind us in the course of the evening), Will Crooks was the son of a marine stoker; and in the second, because he was a wag.

Not all of Mr Jacobs's sea-faring heroes are conscious of their humour, of course; indeed, it is in the unconscious humorists that he finds his best inspiration; but he is prolific, also, of examples of that canny, ready-tongued type of dealer in good-humoured chaff who is best characterised as a wag—a wag rather than a wit. When we call a man a "wit," we are apt unconsciously to class him with the Sheridans and Sydney Smiths, with Disraeli and Douglas Jerrold and G. K. Chesterton—with men of transcendent talents. The word "wag" does not suggest such brilliancy of intellect. There is often nothing at all intellectual in a wag's best jokes. I remember one of Will Crooks's which was essentially "waggish," and which was, in its homely way, unsurpassable. It was in the House of Commons. Mr Winston Churchill, that morning the happy father of a baby daughter, was very excusably absent from his place on the Ministerial Bench. But there was a matter of some urgency under discussion, particularly affecting his department. Lord Hugh Cecil was scandalised by the Liberal Minister's neglect of his parliamentary duties,

and was expressing his disapproval in stern and vehement sentences, when Crooks called out genially—" You wait till you're married yourself, my boy ! "

It was still only eight o'clock and the lecture was not to begin till 8.15. Will Crooks took a turn down the Tottenham Court Road. I made my way into the hall to wait. It was already more than half full. In normal times one would have had to be there early, no doubt, but the war was on and a large proportion of the young men of the Mission were in camp or at the front, and there was evidently no danger now of over-crowding. It was a middle-aged audience for the most part. Near me sat a notable-looking man in an expensive fur coat—possibly a fellow legislator anxious to find out what kind of tales Will Crooks was going to tell out of school. For " Some Troubles of an M.P." was the title of the discourse.

They were not to be very flattering tales, for the most part. Crooks did not finish, indeed, without giving the devil his due ; he admitted two great virtues in the House of Commons—its habit of refusing to take a man at his own valuation, and its readiness to listen sympathetically to any one who is in earnest and has really something to say ; but the House was subjected to more than an hour of ruthless " ragging " before the lecturer could bring himself to pay it this tribute.

First of all, how does a man get into the House ? How is he selected ? And Crooks set out gaily to give us a histrionic representation of the preliminary discussions between the wire-pullers of the constituency and the would-be candidates, young Mr Fitznoodle and middle-aged Mr Brown. Mr Fitznoodle, though he has had an elaborate education and has been through a course of economics, is unable to explain to a feminine heckler how she is to provide for her husband and seven children on twenty-four bob a week, and in a variety of other ways he discloses his unsuitability, so Mr Brown, a prominent local tradesman, is chosen by his party and comes in at the head of the poll, thus, as he is assured on all sides by his supporters, " saving the Empire."

Having achieved this triumph, he makes his first appearance at the Bar of the House (not really a bar, it seems, but only a piece of American matting) supported on either side by two Members. Will Crooks as the agitated Parliamentary new-comer, with the Returning Officer's paper in his trembling fingers, was really delightful ! His nervousness was catching, and we were all quite relieved when the ordeal was over and Mr Brown had safely taken his seat. The new M.P.'s two mentors proceed now to initiate him further into the mysteries, and a few days later he is instructed how to ask his first

question. It is not a very important question, and the Home Secretary's reply strikes him as very curt and discouraging, but, to his astonishment, his two friends assure him he has scored heavily. And so it really does seem when " Question," transcribed in full, and " Answer," suitably amended and enlarged, are printed in leaded type in the local Party organ, under the headline in large caps :—

OUR MEMBER AT WORK

Next, we were taken behind the scenes with regard to the presentation of a Private Bill, and were instructed in the science and art of Bill-blocking ; and we were given also a most disrespectful rendering of a full-dress debate on a Governmental measure. Imagine Will Crooks as the pompous Prime Minister, weighed down with the importance of his position. There was never, the Prime Minister declares, introduced into Parliament a measure so essential to the welfare of the country as the one which, after long consideration and preparation, he is about to introduce to the House. (Hear ! Hear ! *Hear ! Hear !* HEAR ! HEAR ! HEAR ! HEAR ! — the lecturer's magnificent lungs doing almost more than justice to the " loud and long continued applause.") In due course we heard the Leader of the Opposition, indignant and scornful to the last degree. The Right Honourable Gentleman the Prime Minister had in his time put before them measures of a preposterous character ; but surely never in all their experience of Parliamentary life had they been called upon to consider a proposal so wild and monstrous and so manifestly ruinous to the Constitution of the Empire ! . . . Really we all felt that the Prime Minister had better turn it over in his mind a bit longer.

As to the actual " troubles " of an M.P., on which Crooks, according to the title of his lecture, was to dilate, they did not seem to amount to much, apart from the tremors and anxieties of the election. The most trying of Mr Brown's troubles would appear to be a visitation from the Ladies' Committee, whose enthusiasm and exertions were in part responsible for getting him in, and whom, therefore, he is in honour bound to welcome when they turn up at the House to pay him their respects. The Ladies' Gallery being closed, there is nothing for it but to conduct them personally over the building and give them tea on the Terrace, pointing out Celebrities the while.

" Who's that little man with the plump figure and the long hair ?"

" Oh, that's Lloyd George."

" Oh, so that's 'im, is it ? " and they have a good look at the most outstanding Celebrity of the lot.

St Stephen's Hall with its splendid proportions awes and silences them. Members of Parliament with swelled heads, Will Crooks declared, ought to be made to take a turn occasionally round St Stephen's Hall. They would soon get a sense of proportion. An experience of his own made him realise this aspect of it, for he was rash enough once to walk through it with his youngest daughter. For some time she said nothing, but at last she remarked reflectively : " You seem quite a big man in our kitchen at home, daddy, but you don't seem big here ! "

There were any number of good things in the lecture, but at this distance of time I can't remember them. It was quite admirably delivered. I don't know any actor who could have improved upon the effective climax, as we left the House of Commons in imagination at three a.m., and the familiar cry of " Who goes home ? " in stentorian tones seemed to echo and re-echo through the long corridors and over the spacious courts of Westminster. . . . " Who goes home ? "—we heard it for the last time, and Will Crooks, with a nod of his head and a twinkle in his eye, went down the steps from the platform.

FAREWELL TO AMERICA

By HENRY W. NEVINSON

IN mist and driving snow the towers of New York fade from view. The great ship slides down the river. Already the dark, broad seas gloom before her. Good-bye, most beautiful of modern cities! Good-bye to glimmering spires and lighted bastions, dreamlike as the castles and cathedrals of a romantic vision, though mainly devoted to commerce and finance! Good-bye to thin films of white steam that issue from central furnaces and flit in dissolving wreaths around those precipitous heights! Good-bye to heaven-piled offices, so clean, so warm, where lovely stenographers, with silk stockings and powdered faces, sit leisurely at work or converse in charming ease! Good-bye, New York! I am going home. I am going to an ancient city of mean and mouldering streets; of ignoble coverts for mankind, extended monotonously under many miles of grimy smoke clinging closer than a blanket; of smudgy typists who know something of powder but little of silk, and less of leisure and charming ease. Good-bye, New York! I am going home.

Good-bye to beautiful "apartments" and "homes"! Good-bye to windows looking far over the city as from a mountain peak! Good-bye to central heating and radiators, fit symbols of the hearts they warm! Good-bye to frequent and well-appointed bathrooms, the glory of America's art! Good-bye to suburban gardens running into each other without hedge or fence to separate friend from friend or enemy from enemy! Good-bye to shady verandahs where rocking chairs stand ranged in rows, ready for reading the voluminous Sunday papers and the *Saturday Evening Post*! Good-bye, America! I am going home. I am going to a land where every man's house is his prison—a land of open fires and chilly rooms and frozen water-pipes, of washing-stands and slop-pails, and one bath per household at the most; a land of fences and hedges and walls, where people sit aloof, and see no reason to make themselves seasick by rocking upon shore. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the copious meals—the early grape-fruit, the "cereals," the eggs broken in a glass! Good-bye to oysters, large

SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS

III. Mr H. W. NEVINSON

By Powys Evans

and small, to celery and olives beside the soup, to "sea food," to sublimated viands, to bleeding duck, to the salad course, to the "individual pie" or the thick wedge of apple pie, to the invariable slab of ice-cream, to the coffee, also bland with cream, to iced water and home-brewed alcohol! I am going to the land of joints and roots and solid pudding; the land of ham-and-eggs and violent tea; the land where oysters are good for suicides alone, and where cream is seldom seen; the land where mustard grows and whisky flows. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the long stream of motors — "limousines" or "flivvers"! Good-bye to the signal lights upon Fifth Avenue, gold, crimson, and green; the sudden halt when the crimson light shines, as though at the magic word an enchanted princess had fallen asleep; the hurried rush for the leisurely lunch at noon, the deliberate appearance of hustle and bustle in business, however little is accomplished, the Jews, innumerable as the Red Sea sand! Good-bye to outside staircases for escape from fire! Good-bye to scrappy suburbs littered with rubbish of old boards, tin pails, empty cans, and boots! Good-bye to standardised villages and small towns, alike in litter, in ropes of electric wires along the streets, in clanking "trolleys," in chapels, stores, railway stations, Main Streets, and isolated wooden houses flung at random over the country-side. Good-bye to miles of advertisement imploring me in ten-foot letters to eat somebody's cod fish ("No Bones!"), or smoke somebody's cigarettes ("They Satisfy!"), or sleep with innocence in the "Faultless Nightgown"! Good-bye to the long trains where one smokes in a lavatory, and sleeps at night upon a shelf screened with heavy green curtains and heated with stifling air, while over your head or under your back a baby yells and the mother tosses moaning, until at last you reach your "stopping-off place," and a semi-negro sweeps you down with a little broom, as in a supreme rite of unction! Good-bye to the house that is labelled "One Hundred Years Old," for the amazement of mortality! Good-bye to thin woods, and fields enclosed with casual pales, old hoops, and lengths of wire! I am going to a land of the policeman's finger, where the horse and the bicycle still drag out a lingering life; a land of persistent and silent toil; a land of old villages and towns as little like each other as one woman is like the next; a land where trains are short, and one seldom sleeps in them, for in any direction within a day they will reach a sea; a land of vast and ancient trees, of houses time-honoured three centuries ago, of cathedrals that have been growing for a thousand years, and of village churches built while people believed in God. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the land of a new language in growth; of split infinitives and cross-bred words; the land where a dinner-jacket is a "Tuxedo," a spittoon a "Cuspidor"; where your opinion is called your "reaction," and where "vamp," instead of meaning an improvised accompaniment to a song, means a dangerous female! Good-bye to the land where grotesque exaggeration is called humour, and people gape in bewilderment at irony, as a bullock gapes at a dog straying in his field! Good-bye to the land where strangers say, "Glad to meet you, sir," and really seem glad; where children incessantly whine and wail their little desires, and never grow much older; where men keep their trousers up with belts that run through loops, and women have to bathe in stockings. I am going to a land of ancient speech, where we still say "record" and "concord" and "docile" for "recud" and "concud" and "dossle"; where "unnecessarily" and "extraordinarily" must be taken at one rush, as hedge-ditch-and-rail in the hunting field; where we do not "commute" or "check" or "page," but "take a season" and "register" and "send a boy round"; where we never say we are glad to meet a stranger, and seldom are; where humour is understatement, and irony is our habitual resource in danger or distress; where children are told they are meant to be seen and not heard; where it is "bad form" to express emotion, and suspenders are a strictly feminine article of attire. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to the multitudinous papers, indefinite of opinion, crammed with insignificant news, and asking you to continue a first-page article on page 23 column 5! Good-bye to the weary platitude, accepted as wisdom's latest revelation! Good-bye to the docile audiences that lap rhetoric for sustenance! Good-bye to politicians contending for aims more practical than principles! Good-bye to Republicans and Democrats, distinguishable only by mutual hatred! Good-bye to the land where Liberals are thought dangerous, and Radicals show red! Where Mr Gompers is called a Socialist, and Mr Asquith would seem advanced! A land too large for concentrated indignation; a land where wealth beyond the dreams of British profiteers dwells, dresses, gorges, and luxuriates, emulated and unashamed! I am going to a land of politics violently divergent; a land where even Coalitions cannot coalesce; where meetings break up in turbulent disorder, and no platitude avails to soothe the savage breast; a land fierce for personal freedom, and indignant with rage for justice; a land where wealth is taxed out of sight, or for very shame strives to disguise its luxury; a land where an ancient order of feudal families is passing away, and Labour

leaders whom Wall Street would shudder at are hailed by Lord Chancellors as the very fortifications of security. Good-bye, America! I am going home.

Good-bye to prose chopped up to look like verse! Good-bye to the indiscriminating appetite which gulps lectures as opiates, and "printed matter" as literature! Good-bye to the wizards and witches who claim to psycho-analyse my complexes, inhibitions, and silly dreams! Good-bye to the exuberant religious or fantastic beliefs by which unsatisfied mankind still strives desperately to penetrate beyond the flaming bulwarks of the world! Good-bye, Americans! I am going to a country very much like yours. I am going to your spiritual home.

*** *This essay, in a slightly altered form, originally appeared in* The Nation, *February* 1922.

OUR CANTEENS

By KATHARINE ATKINSON

IT is customary for charities and philanthropic institutions and societies to give once a year an account of how they have spent the funds which have been collected during the past twelve months, and to give some particulars of the manner of such spending. These particulars form dull reading, and it is doubtful if nine-tenths of them are ever read.

The League of Service, in publishing " Canteen Pie," is departing altogether from the accepted method. In the pages of this book they offer to the reading public a feast of good things, a book which will be kept and re-read, and they include their accounts and their appeal, hoping that not only will their members and subscribers read them, but that by this means new ground may also be broken.

The League can as yet chronicle only one year of work, yet so much has been accomplished in that year, and the results, from the point of view of the general public, have been so satisfactory, that they feel that they can with confidence appeal for continued and additional support.

The chief work of the League is the establishment of Canteens for the Unemployed. Six of these exist in London and one at Brighton, and since the beginning of this year the number of meals served in the London Canteens has totalled 10,000 per week. The Canteen at Brighton has been carried on from November to May by the untiring efforts of its organiser, Miss Blanche Fair, O.B.E., J.P., and the ladies and gentlemen who have assisted her. It is now closed for the summer months, re-opening in September; but in London, that city of unemployment and distress, the work has to be carried on all the year round.

The first Canteen to be opened was at 13 Page Street, Westminster. There, if you climb a steep and narrow stairway to the second floor of what was an old pickle factory, you will find a long, low, well-lighted room filled between 12 and 2.30 with men of all grades and ages, in all stages of destitution, from the clerk out of work, striving to make the most of his appearance and doing his best to hide the ragged shirt cuffs, the frayed edges of his coat, to the man who is openly " down and out," who has gone under, and has little or no

A GOOD BOWL OF SOUP

hope for the future. There each day in this Canteen, as in the others at 178 Waterloo Road, on Paddington Green, at 5 Clarendon Street, Euston, at Holman Road, Battersea, and at Greenwich, you will find this motley throng being served with a good substantial dinner by the ladies who are in charge. Here you find the true meaning of the League—" to serve " is its ideal—and there are now 210 ladies working voluntarily at these Canteens. Each has her day, four or five being at each Canteen daily as necessity arises—some being more crowded than others—and there these men find anew the old spirit of comradeship which existed between them and the ladies who served in the Canteens during the war.

The men pay for their food. The League is not a charity ; it is an effort to help the poor to help themselves, and they would rather pay so long as they can do so, and thus preserve their independence. A good dinner of hot roast beef or stew with two vegetables and bread costs fivepence, a large bowl of soup with bread twopence, and rice pudding, tea or coffee, a penny. A man can feed nobly for sixpence, and hundreds of men have told those engaged in the work what a boon it has been to them, whilst more than one clergyman living in the districts where the Canteens are established, tells us how it has saved many poor families from despair during the past winter.

Women and children may take home meals from these Canteens, and hundreds of them do so, whilst several times this winter we have had a pathetic family of four to six motherless children coming daily for their mid-day meal. In these cases the father deposits the money for their food each week, and can go off on his hunt for work knowing that his children are sure of a good meal.

But the work of the League does more than feed. For many months an Employment Bureau on a small scale has been carried on, and in the past nine months over 100 men have been placed in jobs. Letters for hospitals have been given ; cases have been sent at the League's expense to convalescent homes ; men who have got work, but have pawned or sold their tools, have been helped to start again ; and several pension cases have been taken up. Last, but not least, the League collects old clothing from subscribers and others, and hundreds of men have benefited from this. Men who by reason of their ragged appearance cannot obtain a hearing when applying for work, have been fitted out with decent clothes and have soon found a job. This department is ever wanting more and more clothing and boots, and readers of this appeal are asked to send any clothing they can spare to the Offices of the League at 7 Burwood Place, W. 2.

On Christmas Day last, the League entertained over 500 men to

a free Christmas dinner. This was given in three of the Canteens, and over 40 ladies gave up their time to wait on the men. A typical dinner of roast beef and plum pudding was given, followed by dessert and cigarettes, and the Canteens were gaily decorated for the occasion. The most remarkable feature was that at each Canteen, at the close of dinner, some man rose in his place and made a little speech of thanks to the League and the ladies who were there to wait, and the cheers which followed brought tears to the eyes of all those who had gone down to make a Christmas Day for those who were homeless and hopeless.

This was a little scene which best illustrates the far-reaching value of the League's work. It has done much during the past year to dispel the class feeling so carefully fostered by the followers of Communism, and has brought about a better and kindlier feeling and understanding between the " down and outs " and those who are better off.

Much has been learnt by both sides. Those who work in the Canteens have heard hundreds of sad stories in the past few months, have helped some, have cheered some, have been sometimes disappointed ; but for every failure there have been many successes. Letters are frequently received at the Office from men who were helped to find work and who still remember us with gratitude, one even coming from Australia from a man whom we had fitted out with clothes to help him to emigrate.

Her Majesty the Queen has twice subscribed to the funds of the League and has caused a letter to be sent expressing her appreciation of the work, and a similar letter, with donation, has also been received from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The Ministries of Health and Labour have taken a great interest in the work, and the Secretary of the League has been appointed to represent the League on the Government's Homeless Poor Committee. The Commissioner of Police deeply appreciates the work done and authorised a collection throughout the Force to endow a Canteen, and the Metropolitan Special Constabulary kindly provided funds for the equipment of the Battersea Canteen. Great kindness has also been shown by some Members of the Stock Exchange and Lloyd's, who helped to start two other Canteens, and also by members of White's and the Embassy Clubs. The funds for equipping the Euston Canteen were kindly provided by a lady who, though living in the country, realises the need for the work being done. This Canteen is in the Hall of the Magdalen College Mission, and the work has been greatly helped by the clergy in charge.

Thanks are due to so many that space forbids details of all who have so nobly helped, but mention must be made of that given to

CHILDREN AT THE COUNTER

the League by Sir Philip Gibbs, who not only spoke for the League at an "At Home," but also wrote an article in *The Tatler* on "The Down and Outs," which brought in a sum of over £400 from those who read it in all parts of the world.

The whole success of the work has been gained by the untiring efforts of those ladies who give up their time to serve in the Canteens. Without them it would be useless: it is their sympathy and understanding which has enabled it to be done so satisfactorily. The League is non-political and non-sectarian, and the men appreciate the fact that they can enter the Canteens, buy a good meal, and talk to the ladies who serve them with never an attempt to proselytise or convert. The work is propaganda in itself, preaching the spirit of comradeship, help, and sympathy, without which nothing can be attained, for on these the whole basis of Christianity rests.

The accompanying Balance Sheet will show that at the end of 1923 the League was in a satisfactory financial position, but it should be realised that funds are ever needed to carry on and increase the work. The amount, small as it is, paid by the men for their food does not cover the wages of the kitchen staffs, rent, gas, and other expenses, which are kept as low as possible. There is no large clerical staff, and the office is in a private house, but undertakings of this magnitude cannot be carried on without some overhead charges.

A subscription of 4s. per annum (minimum) constitutes Membership of the League. Donations, which are urgently needed, should be sent to the Office at 7 Burwood Place, W. 2, cheques being made payable to The League of Service and crossed National Provincial Bank.

The following Firms have kindly contributed to the Funds of the League of Service:—

Army & Navy Co-operative Society, Ltd.
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Christopher & Co.
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Coventry Shoe Co.
Daimler Hire, Ltd.
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Home & Colonial Stores, Ltd.
Horne Bros.
Knoedler & Co.
Liberty & Co., Ltd.
J. Lyons & Co., Ltd.
Mallett & Co. (of Bath)
G. M'Kenzie, Ltd.
Charles Moykopf
Daniel Neal & Sons, Ltd.
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Auditors:

Messrs JAMES & COWPER, 4 Walbrook, E.C. 4.

UPB

BALANCE SHEET, 31*st December* 1923.

LIABILITIES.				ASSETS.			
Sundry Creditors—				Cash at Bank	£663 16 2		
St Clement's Press	£8 8 6			,, in Hand	19 8 4		
A. Yeates & Sons	10 10 0					£683 4 6	
G. T. Cox & Sons, Ltd.	13 1 0			Sundry Debtors		31 6 10	
Willsons	0 18 6			Office Furniture, at cost		55 4 6	
Gas	92 6 6			Car, at cost		66 11 5	
		£125 4 6		Plant and Utensils Purchased		718 9 6	
				Investment Account—			
Income and Expenditure Account		2059 9 3		£580, 19s. 5d. 5 per cent. War Stock, 1929-47		600 0 0	
				Telephone Deposit		1 10 0	
				Hire of Æolian Hall, paid in advance		28 7 0	
		£2184 13 9				£2184 13 9	

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT, 17*th February* 1923 to 31*st December* 1923.

EXPENDITURE.				INCOME.			
To Canteen Running Expenses, viz. :—				By Canteens Department—			
Rents	£200 16 8			Receipts—			
Provisions	1299 6 3			Page St. Canteen (opened Feb.)	£655 19 6		
Gas and Coke	167 3 2			Paddington (opened May)	672 12 10		
Wages	1303 12 1			Waterloo (opened Oct.)	239 19 3		
General Expenses	177 2 8			Euston (opened Nov.)	31 7 1		
		£3148 0 10		Hackney (opened Dec.)	5 16 8		
,, Gifts to Necessitous Persons		128 7 9		Greenwich (opened Nov.)	30 12 8		
,, Administration Expenses, viz. :—						£1636 8 0	
Hire of Rooms, Advertising, and Collecting Expenses	£221 15 8			,, Donations, etc.		5051 19 0	
Printing, Postages, and Stationery	245 6 2			,, Dividend on War Loan		29 0 10	
Travelling, Telephone, and General Expenses	121 5 5			,, Ministry of Pensions—			
Office Expenses and Salaries	793 2 9			Amount received to disburse for Pensioner	£36 0 0		
		1381 10 0		*Less* Disbursed	36 0 0		
		£4657 18 7				...	
,, Excess of Income over Expenditure		2059 9 3					
		£6717 7 10				£6717 7 10	

Approved this 9th day of May 1924.

Signed { PEMBROKE AND MONTGOMERY. / MARY MONTAGU. / G. H. ATKINSON } *Committee.*

We certify we have examined the books and accounts of The League of Service (Canteens for the Unemployed), and have prepared therefrom, and from information supplied, the foregoing Income and Expenditure Account to 31st December 1923, and the Balance Sheet at that date, and certify same to be in accordance therewith.

(Sd.) JAMES & COWPER, *Auditors.*

4 Walbrook, London, E.C. 4,
19*th May* 1924.

"THERE'S A MAN ON THE ROAD"

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There's a lad on the road with a broken heart,
A sin that bears him down,
Friendless and weary he trudges along,
Alone in the dreary town.
Who cares a rap for a broken heart?
We look to the man who wins,
And are far too busy to worry ourselves
Over another's sins.

There's a chap on the road with a ruined life,
Deep in the grip of vice,
With neither the will nor the strength to fight
The first that offers a price.
Then let him go under, the fault's his own,
The fittest alone survive;
There's prison and workhouse for such as him,
They'll keep his body alive.

There's a man on the road with a broken vow
That's eating into his heart,
A promise once made to mother or wife
From whom he's drifted apart.
But the world goes on with a careless laugh
Its pleasure and profit to seek.
Who'll lend a hand to a man like that?
—Has no one courage to speak?

WHAT HAPPENED TO JONES—

THE CURE—

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PREVENTION IS BETTER—

Jones has probably been humorously exaggerated by Fougasse, but he is typical of many who give no thought to their health until they begin to lose it. The way to good health lies in preventing illness, not in curing it when it comes. The system needs regular attention to keep it working without a hitch. To keep in perfect health, drink

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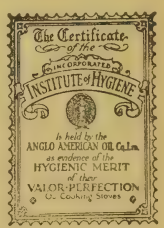

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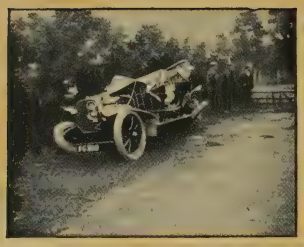

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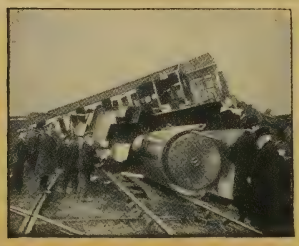

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For particulars see pages 108 to 113.

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